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JOHN WOOLMAN.

A STUDY FOR YOUNG MEN.



THOMAS GREEN, M.A.



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A STUDY FOR YOUNG MEN.



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A STUDY FOR YOUNG MEN.

BY

THOMAS GREEN, M.A.,

*Author of "Porches of the Temple: a Book for Girls
and Boys."*

"He was a good man."—2 SAMUEL xviii. 27.

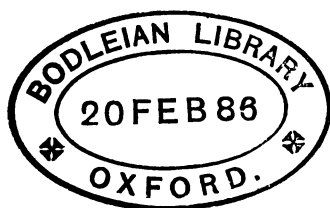
"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."—
ISAIAH xxx. 15.

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DEDICATION.



TO you my friends and companions, the Young Men of the Ryecroft Independent Church, I affectionately dedicate this book. Will you accept it from an old friend? I ask you to read it thoughtfully. It calls your attention to the life of one who, as a young man, gave himself up to the service of God with an earnestness and single-heartedness which has rarely, if ever, been equalled. To many of his views and practices I cannot expect you to assent; but if the study of John Woolman's life shall lead any of you to throw aside anything that may hinder your spiritual progress in even the smallest degree, I shall think the little time and labour bestowed upon the book amply repaid, and shall thank God and take courage.

THOMAS GREEN.

October 28th, 1885.



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P R E F A C E.

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SOME years ago I read Crabb Robinson's Diary. Under the date January 22nd, 1824, he says that in riding to London from Bury he employed himself in reading Edward Irving's "Argument of Judgment to Come," and he remarks upon it that "it is written rather to alarm than persuade; and to some it would have the effect of deterring from belief." He then adds, "How different this from John Woolman's Journal, I have been reading at the same time. A perfect gem! His is a *schöne seele* (beautiful soul). An illiterate tailor, he writes in a style of the most exquisite purity and grace. His moral qualities are transferred to his writings. Had he not been so very humble he would have written a still better book, for, fearing to indulge in vanity, he conceals the events in which he was a great actor. His religion is love. His whole existence and all his passions were love!

If one could venture to impute to his creed, and not to his personal character, the delightful frame of mind which he exhibited, one could not hesitate to be a convert. His Christianity is most inviting,—it is fascinating.” Four months afterwards Robinson called on Edward Irving and left him a copy of John Woolman, Robinson adding in his diary—“a book which exhibits a Christian *all love*. Woolman was a missionary, and Irving is writing on the missionaries. He called it a God-send.” In 1826, in riding to Norwich, Robinson “took up a very gentlemanly Quaker.” This turned out to be Joseph John Gurney, with whom Robinson entered into conversation, and praised a work of Quaker autobiography without naming it. Gurney at once said, “Thou meanest John Woolman. Let me not take credit for a sagacity I do not possess. Amelia Opie has told me of thy admiration of the book.” It was Charles Lamb that had brought Woolman’s book to Robinson’s notice. In his essay on “A Quaker’s Meeting,” Lamb says, “Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all Church narratives, to read Sewel’s History of the Quakers.” . . . “It is far more edifying and affecting than anything you will read of Wesley and his colleagues.” A few lines further on Lamb singles out one of the early *Quakers*,—one who lived shortly after the period

at which Sewel's history ends,—and advises us to “get the writings of John Woolman by heart, and love the early Quakers.” Acting on this testimony I read Sewel's history and Woolman's journal with all his extant writings, and I had no difficulty in following the latter part of Lamb's advice, and loving the early Quakers. They were indeed men of wonderful strength and simplicity of character. Their clear-headed and clear-hearted obedience to conscience, carried forward incalculably the cause of freedom, and laid mankind under lasting obligation.

I thought it might be of some advantage to the young men and others to whom I minister, if I brought before them the character of John Woolman. What delighted and profited me might, I hoped, do the same for others. When in two lectures I had fulfilled this intention, I was asked to give the production to the press, and I forthwith made the two lectures into a little book for publication. I found, however, that Woolman's Journal, which my lectures urged people to read, was out of print, but that it was about to be re-issued with the introduction by the venerable American Poet, John G. Whittier,—an introduction I had not been able previously to get hold of. The date of this is “Amesbury, 20th 1st mo., 1871,” and *it is now re-published by Robert Smeal (Crosshill,*

Glasgow) with "The Journal of John Woolman." On reading it I did not think it necessary to suppress my little book. I believe I have said a few things about Woolman which may be of service, and I trust I may be the means of introducing him to some readers who hitherto have very possibly heard little or nothing of him. Should this be the case, I would urge them to get his Journal for themselves with Whittier's most admirable introduction, and to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it," even if they do not literally carry out Lamb's advice, and get his writings "by heart." I think if they do this, they will receive into their lives a pure and stimulating influence that will benefit them to the end of their days. In an Epistle Woolman wrote to "Friends" in the back settlements of North Carolina, he gives utterance to a few weighty words which those who may read this book will do well to consider:—"Dear young people, choose God for your portion; love His truth, and be not ashamed of it; choose for your company such as serve Him in uprightness; and shun as most dangerous the conversation of those whose lives are of an ill savour; for by frequenting such company some hopeful young people have come to great loss, and been drawn from less evils to greater, to their utter ruin."



JOHN WOOLMAN.

A STUDY FOR YOUNG MEN.

CHAPTER I.

America in the Time of Woolman—His Silence on Contemporary Events—Settlement and Progress of the "Friends" in the United States.

WE are going to look at a man whose life is not I think sufficiently known. The brief auto-biography of John Woolman is pre-eminently worthy of study, and I believe a short account of one of the most self-denying men that ever sought to bear the burdens of others, and of one of the most loving Christian hearts that ever beat will not be unwelcome.

Bancroft, in his History of the United States, describes the life and travels of John Woolman, as an "uncommonly beautiful specimen of spiritual biography," and none will differ from this verdict

who are capable of appreciating the loftiest Christian qualities when found in a very lowly garb. Mr. J. Stuart Mill regarded Woolman's great principle as "dependence on the immediate teaching of a superior being." Crabb Robinson, Edward Irving, Channing, and Charles Lamb, have expressed the warmest admiration for Woolman, and undoubtedly if the Society of Friends were in the habit of canonising their most revered members, John Woolman's name would be almost at the head of their roll. Thus we see that men of the most widely different types are heartily in accord as they look upon the character we are about to study.

John Woolman was born in August, 1720, and died, fifty-two years of age, in 1772. He spent nearly the whole of his life in America, though, as it happened, his days were ended on this side the Atlantic. He was the subject successively of George I., George II., and George III., kings of England. All through Woolman's lifetime the great conflict was preparing which resulted in American independence. The new country was feeling her strength and making ready her limbs to shake off fetters that, but for English blindness, would never have been imposed. Deep dissatisfaction had begun as long ago as 1709, and even before, provoked by the folly of Lord Cornbury, and had been intensified by a succession of sin-

gularly unwise governors, representing only too faithfully the mind of England. America claimed legislative independence in 1748, though with no idea at that time of separating from the mother country. During the next eight and twenty years the elements of the great struggle were gathering on every hand. For twenty-four of these years, till his death in 1772, Woolman was a contemporary of these events, and it is surprising how slight are the references he makes to them. Yet within four years of his death the Colonies had taken the most decisive act of rebellion in publishing the "Declaration of Independence." And when we observe his reticence on the politics of his own country, we feel no surprise that he is absolutely silent on other great movements that were going on in the world. He appears to have known next to nothing of incidents that have altered the condition of a great portion of the globe. He had great contemporaries who were doing great things. He must have heard of Sir Robert Walpole, but it is doubtful whether he knew anything of Peter the Great or of Frederick of Prussia. Wider conquests than the British arms had ever before made were being achieved, and immense discoveries, at first quite immeasurable, were adding vast territories to the British empire in the East and West and South. The victories of Clive in India belong to the middle

of that century. Plassey was fought in 1757. The battle of Quebec took place a little later, in 1759, and Canada was taken from the French. About the same time the great Southern Continent of Australia, of indefinite extent and resources, was made familiar to the English mind by Captain Cook. Woolman seems to take no more notice of these things than he does of the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton or of Franklin. They lay outside his life as much as the literary productions of Johnson, Pope, or Gray.

The reader of his Journal wonders whether he knew anything of the great frauds and delusions of the earlier part of his century. It was in 1720, the year of his birth, that the notorious Mississippi scheme and the South Sea speculation collapsed and brought hundreds of families to ruin. He may have heard of these and of other commercial phrensies, but he never mentions them.

So also the most important *religious* movement in modern times took place when Woolman was 18 years of age, for it was in 1738 that Wesley founded Methodism. How largely American national and religious life has been influenced by that event is matter of familiar knowledge. In truth, though no electric cable in those days tied the two countries together, there was not a *movement of any magnitude* in the mother country

that did not pulsate, and very rapidly, through the veins of her distant daughter. But Woolman, like the Shunammite woman, might have said, "I dwell among mine own people." He presented no heroic form to the world. He headed no great popular cause. He was not amongst the prominent in politics, in war, in discovery, in science, in literature, or in art; nor was he in the forefront of any religious organization. But one of the darkest blots on human history has been wiped out by efforts which few men did more than he to stimulate and to inspire.

When Woolman was thirty-six years of age, he began to keep a Journal. George Fox, the illustrious founder of the "Friends," had kept a journal, and Woolman determined, though at a comparatively late period of his life, to follow so honoured an example. Woolman's Journal is wonderful for its honest directness and transparent simplicity. Not a word is set down for effect. It is a plain tale, and in its mode of telling it reminds one more than any other book of the simple style of the Gospel narratives. It is only a brief record, but the author evidently has a clear recollection of his early history, and especially of those portions of it that bore in a direct manner upon the formation of his character, and that gave to his life its great purpose.

Just as he refers but seldom to public events, so he tells us very little about his own circle. He was of a most loving disposition, but personal affection was almost overshadowed by, if not merged in, a Christ-like compassion for suffering mankind. As he beheld the condition of the slaves, his love and pity for them became such mastering emotions that we can almost imagine we hear him say, "these are my brethren and my sisters." His extreme humility no doubt led him to observe a silence we should have been glad for him to have broken. He says so little as to his relatives that we may give it in a few words, and it will then not be necessary to revert to the subject. Woolman's parents were "Friends," amongst the Quaker settlements in New England, and lived in a condition of comfort, though not of wealth. They appear to have followed the occupation of farming, the farm being called "The Plantation." They were devout and sensible people, and they possessed two excellencies in a marked degree. They made their children the subjects of habitual and earnest prayer, and, by way of following up their desires and petitions, they were careful to furnish them with a supply of good books. Their children were taught to read as early as possible, and were so taught as to acquire a taste for books *of a worthy kind*. Perhaps it was the circum-

stance that none but good books were put into the hands of the children that John in early life supposed "the former days to be better than these." Life, as recorded in the model volumes he read and life as he witnessed it around him, presented points of contrast not favourable to the present, and the reflection caused him, as a child, no little trouble. Samuel Woolman, John's father, died of a fever in 1750, when about sixty years of age. His son says of him,—“In his lifetime he manifested much care for us his children, that in our youth we might learn to fear the Lord, and often endeavoured to imprint in our minds the true principles of virtue, and particularly to cherish in us a spirit of tenderness, not only towards poor people, but also towards all creatures, of which we had the command.” Before his death he spoke to his son on a pamphlet the latter had written. It was entitled, “Considerations on Keeping Negroes,” and the father evidently encouraged John to publish it should “Friends” so advise. The good man “continued in a weighty frame of mind, and was sensible till near the last.” He died having “no doubt that on leaving this life he should enter into one more happy.” There is a reference also to two sisters of the father. John Woolman also gives one incident connected with a brother, whose name he does not mention.

“Feeling the exercise in relation to a visit to the Southern Provinces to increase upon me, I acquainted our Monthly Meeting therewith, and obtained their certificate. Expecting to go alone, one of my brothers who lived in Philadelphia, having some business in North Carolina, proposed going with me part of the way ; but as he had a view of some outward affairs, to accept of him as a companion was some difficulty with me, whereupon I had conversation with him at sundry times.” No “view of outward affairs” must be allowed to fetter his missionary work, and even his brother must not accompany him if the one spiritual object of the mission would be endangered. It resulted in the brother going, but there is not any further allusion to him. In the year before the death of his father he lost his eldest sister—Elizabeth—who died of small-pox, aged 31. Woolman sets down the fact without a syllable of comment ; but in a note of about three pages given as an Appendix, he tells of her thoughtful and compassionate disposition, and how, “after she attained to mature age, through the gracious visitations of God’s love, she was strengthened to live a self-denying exemplary life, giving herself much to reading and meditation.” We are not surprised that he should be all but silent as to his large *family of brothers and sisters*, when we notice with

how slight a touch he alludes to those still nearer to him. His reference to his own marriage is very characteristic. Not a word as to how it came about, and no information on the bride, or her native place, or family, or character. "About this time, believing it good for me to settle, and thinking seriously about a companion, my heart was turned to the Lord with desires that He would give me wisdom to proceed therein agreeably to His will; and He was pleased to give me a well-inclined damsel, Sarah Ellis, to whom I was married the 18th of eighth month, 1749." His Journal contains a letter he wrote to his wife in 1760, and from this we learn that he had one daughter, and just before his death he speaks of his wife and family. His letter to his wife illustrates what has been said as to the deep love of his heart for suffering mankind overpowering every other love:—"Since I left you," he writes, "I have often an engaging love and affection towards thee and my daughter, and friends about home, and going out at this time, when sickness is so great amongst you, is a trial upon me; yet I often remember there are many widows and fatherless, many who have poor tutors, many who have evil examples before them, and many whose minds are in captivity; for whose sake my heart is at times moved with compassion, so that I feel my mind resigned

to leave you for a season, to exercise that gift which the Lord hath bestowed on me, which, though small compared with some, yet in this I rejoice, that I feel love unfeigned towards my fellow-creatures." How far the wife supported her most unselfish but very eccentric husband, and to what extent his brothers and sisters countenanced their remarkably original relative we are not informed. Woolman was very far from being indifferent to personal human affection, but he had in an uncommon degree the power of walking alone, and this was because he possessed, also in a rare measure, the abiding certainty that God was with him.

Before continuing his history, it will be well to say a word or two on the progress of American colonization up to Woolman's time, and on the history and position of the American Quakers. We shall thus be better able to appreciate the state of society and of opinion in which John Woolman found himself.

What may be called the historic period of the history of North America, at least as far as England is concerned, dates from about the beginning of the seventeenth century. For a hundred years before that, the Newfoundland fisheries were the only, as they had been the first, link between

England and North America. Soon after James' accession to the throne of England, he granted a charter by which an enormous district on the American coast was made over to two trading companies, one belonging to London the other to Plymouth. The settlements were to be distinguished by the names of the First and the Second Colonies of Virginia. The first settlement actually made was in 1607, and the emigrants gave the name of James Town to the spot they selected. It was on a peninsula, and was supposed to be capable of easy defence, but it was very unfavourable to health. In 1614, Captain Smith, in the employment of the Plymouth Company, explored the coast from Penobscot Bay down southward to Cape Cod, and he gave to this extensive region the name of New England, the title being afterwards confirmed by the authorities at home. But in 1620, the Plymouth Company obtained a charter called "The Great Patent," and this included much more than Smith had explored. The country nominally taken possession of stretched back westwards indefinitely, and thus in fact the whole country was divided by a line that corresponded generally with what afterwards became the boundary between the free states and the slave states. The Northern section was New England, and the Southern Virginia. The Pilgrim Fathers went over

the Atlantic in 1620, and founded New Plymouth, on the New England coast. In a few years, a great many settlers planted themselves along the same coast, the greater proportion of them being driven from England by the tyranny of the Stuarts. This continued for about twenty years. When the Long Parliament met in 1640, it was no more necessary to flee away from oppression, and the stream of emigration ceased. The persecution that drove so much earnestness out of England was doing that which fatally recoiled upon the intolerant country. The pith and power of the rebellion that separated the United States from England were furnished by the descendants of those men whom tyranny and cruelty had driven into exile. Emigration did not revive with any very great activity on the restoration of the Stuarts. For nearly a century, down that is to the time of John Woolman's youth, there was comparatively but little transfer of population from this side the Atlantic to the other.

But while settlements were being made on the sea-board of the East of North America, a sect was springing into existence in England that was destined to influence most materially the progress of civilisation and the cause of liberty on both sides the Atlantic.

This was the Society of "Friends," who soon

came to be known by the name "Quakers," a term which may now be used as their designation without any of the opprobrium it at first conveyed. "Those people who began to take heed to a divine conviction in the conscience, and accordingly preached to others the doctrine of an inward light wherewith Christ had enlightened men, in the latter end of King Charles I., began to increase in number, and they became a separate Society among men, and in process of time the name of Quakers was imposed on them in scorn." One Gervas Bennett, a Justice of the Peace in Derby, committed the founder of the Society of Friends and a companion to prison in 1650. The prisoners warned the magistrate and those about him to tremble at the word of the Lord, whereupon the magistrate "took hold of this saying with such an airy mind, that from thence he took occasion to call him and his friends scornfully Quakers." This designation was at once adopted and soon spread far and wide, and became the universally recognised name of the new people. They have found it convenient to assume the name for the sake of distinction, but the name by which they recognise one another is "Friends"—a name suggested by the words of the Lord Jesus—"I have called you friends" (John xv. 15), and following also the example of the earliest Christians, as seen

in Acts xxvii. 3, where Julius, the centurion, gave Paul "liberty to go to the friends." The term is repeated by the Apostle John (John iii. 14) who says, "the friends salute thee," and "greet the friends by name."

It will be remembered that the term Christian originated in a similar manner. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, and the designation has been universally accepted, but we are not told how it arose. It seems to have taken its rise in an accidental way, and was very likely at first conferred by some one who was not a disciple. Those of you who have read Motley's Dutch Republic, will recall the fact that the powerful party known as "The Beggars," received its designation from an enemy, and at once adopted it.

The founder of the Society of Friends was George Fox, born in Drayton, in Leicestershire, England, in 1624, *i.e.*, 96 years before John Woolman. Fox died in 1691, having founded his Society in his early life in 1647, so that Quakers as a Society were about 100 years old in Woolman's day. They multiplied very much in the North of England; but without attempting to trace their growth in the country of their origin, it must be enough to say that George Fox was the victim of cruel persecutions, which he endured with wonderful fortitude,

and that very many of his followers shared the same lot. They had fallen upon hard times, and the heroic endurance of Fox and his followers perhaps did more than anything else to force men's minds to a consideration of the question of religious liberty. The English people felt the cruelty of persecution ; they saw its ineffectiveness, and they gradually came to understand its injustice.

The Quakers began to take possession of the New World in the July of 1656. At that date two Quaker women, named "after the flesh" Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, visited Boston, and the prejudice against the sect to which they belonged was so deep, that all other "heretics" such as Antinomians, Anabaptists, Familists, and Seekers, sank into insignificance.* The Quakers were regarded as a "fit instrument to propagate the kingdom of Satan." The two women were shamefully treated. They were thrown into prison, their books were burned by the common hangman, and they were examined to see whether any marks of witchcraft could be found upon them. This was the beginning of one of the most sad and disgraceful pages of history that has ever been written. Men who had crossed the ocean to escape persecution became possessed by the spirit of the darkest tyranny and cruelty. "Such was the entertainment

* Hildreth's History United States, vol. i. p. 399.

the Quakers first met with at Boston, and that from a people who pretended that for conscience sake they had chosen the wilderness of America, before the well-cultivated old England; though afterwards when they took away the lives of those so-called Quakers, they, to excuse their cruel actions, did not stick to say that at first they had used no punishment against the Quakers.”* Others that came soon after were sent back; but it was impossible to repress them, and a system of terrible persecution was adopted. They were mutilated, imprisoned, flogged, and hanged. Anyone venturing to entertain them was severely punished. Boston gained an infamous notoriety for its unrestrained ferocity. In 1658 its General Court passed a sanguinary act, which, as Sewel truly says, (vol. i. p. 259) is “more like to the decrees of the Spanish Inquisition, than to the laws of a reformed Christian Magistracy.”

Persecutions ceased under William III. The Quakers had suffered much and learned much. Perhaps it would be too much to say that they thoroughly understood the principle of religious liberty. Sewel himself evidently thinks that the crazy founder of the sect of Muggletonians ought to have been imprisoned for his wild errors. He heaps upon him the most tremendous epithets, and adds, “I do not find that any punishment was

* Sewel's History of the Quakers, vol. i. p. 208.

inflicted on him by the magistrates, other than the pillory, and half a year's imprisonment; though many think (not without good reason) that such blasphemers ought to be secluded from conversation with men."

We can hardly appreciate in the present day, and in our own country, the difficulty our ancestors had in determining the true functions of the civil magistrate and the rights of the individual conscience. The conviction was almost universal that a man ought to enforce by the arm of the law any opinion or conduct he believed to be according to the will of God. That there was a vast region of human life which civil law ought to let alone, was an idea foreign to almost every man, whether godless or devout. But certainly the Quakers understood the principles of religious liberty far better than any other men of their time, and taking into consideration their condemnation of war and of violence in general, and their belief that every man had the inner light—thus indicating in the strongest manner the principle of individuality and of personal direct responsibility to God—and adding to this the lesson of their own experience in the shocking persecutions they had suffered, we see how they were fitted historically, logically, and morally to be the leaders and champions of every kind of emancipation. Their principles and their

antecedents alike pledged them more than any other sect to oppose all oppression and intolerance. They thought to contend and to suffer for their own principles, for their right to exist, and to serve God as their conscience taught them. But they were doing far more than this; they were strengthening incalculably the cause of liberty and progress; they were striking a powerful blow at priest-craft, and they were greatly helping forward the whole world on the hard path of freedom.

In 1671-2 George Fox visited his friends in America, whither a large number had gone during the preceding fifteen years. Fox sailed first to Barbadoes, and then went on to Jamaica, New Amsterdam (New York), Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. In this town he beheld the prevalence of slavery amongst his own people. He saw it in the most humane form in which it was possible for it to exist, but he condemned it unequivocally.

Ten years after this visit William Penn, up to that time the most illustrious of Fox's disciples, arrived in Pennsylvania with a colony of Quakers. He there established popular government.* The principal sphere of Quaker colonisation was the banks of the Delaware, and they had largely emigrated to Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina,

* Penn died, aged 74, in 1718, about the year after *Sewel's History* ends.—*Sewel*, vol. ii. p. 386.

West New Jersey, and northward in New England.

This little sketch is, I hope, not too brief to show that Woolman was brought up amongst a people that had felt the oppression and had learned the lessons of persecution. Their sufferings were to Woolman a tale of quite recent history. He felt the power of that history. He must have seen and heard much that would be to him an appeal and an inspiration. In America, the boasted home of freedom, as in England, his ancestors had been the victims of tyranny. Hundreds had died in prison. The roll of martyrs was long and glorious.* But "the more they afflicted them the more they grew." "The freedom of the forests favoured originality of thought; in spite of legislation, men listened to the voice within themselves as to the highest authority; and Quakers continued to multiply."†

By Woolman's time they had become a great power in the New World. In the state of New Jersey alone their meeting houses numbered nearly forty. Like the Israelites of old they were required to remember their house of bondage, and to let others go free. Their sufferings became a great argument, first for their own conduct, con-

* Sewel vol. i. p. 562; vol. i. p. 270; vol. ii. p. 245.

† Bancroft vol. i. p. 498.

straining them to give deliverance to their captives, and then to urge them to strive for universal emancipation. And the Quakers fulfilled this mission. They were the first to set at liberty them that were bound; they were the first to take clear and decisive action against slavery and the slave trade, and John Woolman brings all their best qualities together as in a focus and exhibits them in a light of rare and exquisite purity.





CHAPTER II.

Place of Woolman's Birth—His Regard for the Brute
Creation—Readiness to Learn—Moral Courage—
Conversion—Views on Commerce.

WOOLMAN was born, as I have said, in the State of West New Jersey. The term "West Jersey" was appropriate only for a few years. The boundaries of the States for a century and more underwent frequent changes, so that the limits to which any name applies will depend upon the date of its use. New England, for example, was at first a term that comprised the whole country now occupied by the Northern States. It stretched backward indefinitely, and denoted regions unoccupied and even unexplored. At a later period it comprised simply Massachusetts and New Hampshire. At one time it included Plymouth, the Island of Rhodes (afterwards called Rhode Island), and Connecticut. Later still East and West Jersey ranged under the same designation, and by this addition nearly all

the whole extent of the original New England was again embraced by the term.*

In 1664 Charles the second granted to his brother, the Duke of York, the large and fertile tract of country between the Hudson and the Delaware. The Duke in the same year sold this territory to Lord Berkely and Sir George Carteret, and it then first received the name of New Jersey. Liberal offers were made to settlers, and the proprietors, to their honour, laid down the rule that all vacant land should be purchased from the natives. Self government was to be the constitution of the country. The laws were to be made by the representatives of the people, but the proprietors retained in their own hands the executive power. Philip Carteret was the first governor, and the colony rejoiced in great prosperity. Unhappily this did not continue. In 1673 the Dutch again took possession. They remained, however, for only two years, after which, at the conclusion of peace between England and Holland, the whole was restored to England. The Duke of York then obtained from the King a con-

* Hildreth, vol. i. p. 98 ; ii. pp. 108, 112. A good authority says, "New England was a name given to the North-east portion of the United States, comprising the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut." But Vermont was not admitted till 1791, and Maine not till 1820.

firmation of his former patent. In the next year, 1674, Lord Berkely made over his undivided half of New Jersey to William Penn and his associates, who thus became joint owners with Carteret. This was inconvenient, and it was agreed that Carteret should receive East Jersey, and the Quakers should receive in return Carteret's rights in the Western part of the province. Upon this part the Duke of York still made claims, and there arose in consequence conflicting jurisdiction, which finally led to the abolition of the proprietary government and the loss of the charter in 1702. But the settlement of Penn led a large number of Quakers to New Jersey in the hope of finding a haven of peace. They repaired chiefly to the banks of the Delaware, and they built the towns of Salem and Burlington, called at first New Beverly. It was at Northampton, a village a few miles south east of Burlington, that John Woolman first saw the light.

After he has told us in his journal of the place and date of his birth, one of the first things we come to is an incident connected with the brute creation. His parents had inculcated the duty of combining true tenderness with courage, and we shall see how well their son John learned the double lesson. Cruelty to the lower orders of creation was represented as both a folly and a sin. Such sentiments, and many others that we shall have to notice

in Woolman, were common amongst the Friends. Some of you may remember that not many years ago the Right Hon. John Bright, in one of his public addresses, urged upon schoolmasters the duty of making kindness to our humble fellow creatures a distinct and important part of their teaching. The incident referred, Woolman narrates with characteristic honesty. "I may here mention a remarkable circumstance that occurred in my childhood. On going to a neighbour's house, I saw, on the way, a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off; but, having young ones, she flew about, and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her, and one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, at having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young. I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them. After some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds, and killed them; supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably. In this case I believe that Scripture proverb was fulfilled, 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' I then went on my errand, and for some

hours could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled. Thus He, whose tender mercies are over all His works, hath placed a principle in the human mind, which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature, and this being singly attended to, people become tender hearted and sympathising ; but when frequently and totally rejected, the mind becomes shut up in a contrary disposition."

This one experience was enough. He never had to reproach himself again for any act of unkindness to animals. He was convinced that true religion consisted in an inward life wherein the heart "learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creation." "To say we love God as unseen, and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by His life, or by life derived from Him, was a contradiction in itself."

To the end of his life he taught and practised the duty of compassion to all the creatures whom their Creator and ours has placed under our power. When on the voyage to England, and as "that part of England called the Lizard" appeared in sight, he narrates that "Some fowls yet remained of those the passengers took for their sea store. I believe about fourteen perished in the storms at sea, by the waves breaking over the quarter deck ; and a con-

siderable number with sickness at different times. I observed the cocks crew as we came down the Delaware, and while we were near the land; but afterwards I think I did not hear one of them crow till we came near the English coast, when they again crowed a few times. In observing their dull appearance at sea, and the pining sickness of some of them, I often remembered the Fountain of goodness, who gave being to all creatures, and whose love extends to caring for the sparrows. I believe where the love of God is verily perfected, and the true spirit of government watchfully attended to, a tenderness towards all creatures made subject to us will be experienced, and a care felt in us that we do not lessen that sweetness of life in the animal creation, which the great Creator intends for them under our government."

To record this shows the thoughtful and sensitive character of the man. He could reason closely enough at times, but it was the depth of love filling his heart that made him what he was.

Before John Woolman was seven years old he began to be "acquainted with the operations of divine love." Like Timothy, he was from the first well instructed in Holy Scripture. His earliest remembrance of the New Testament was the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation, with its *description of the New Jerusalem*, and he recalls

the early attraction he felt to seek after that pure habitation. But he also recalls an experience of a different kind. On one occasion, in the absence of his father, he was guilty of some misconduct towards his mother, which he does not specify. When his father came home, there was the administration of rebuke, and very likely of something more impressive than words; for there is no evidence that Friends neglected the maxim, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." Whatever the punishment was, it proved effective. The boy was filled with penitence and shame, and we can fully credit him when he says, that he believes the fault was never repeated. This incident, as well as the previous one of the bird, illustrates an uncommon and valuable feature in Woolman's character. He pondered over any new experience until he had calmly and thoroughly made it familiar to his mind, and had gathered up the lessons it contained. He never needed "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept." He had the hearing ear and the obedient heart.

Like other youths he felt strong temptations to go astray. He speaks of perceiving in himself "a plant which produced much wild grapes," and he uses expressions which, unless we remember his great *humility*, his extremely self-depreciating dis-

position, and his keen sense of the contamination of sin, we should be in danger of misunderstanding. Like John Bunyan, like Oliver Cromwell, like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he feels his own unworthiness in a degree sometimes so overpowering, that he employs terms which might seem to mean he had sunk into gross immorality. When, therefore, he speaks of being "alienated from the truth," of "travelling in a gulf," of "backsliding," and of "hastening down to destruction," and, as he thought of his sins, of "his eye running down with water," we see in such expressions the painful conviction of a soul sensible of alienation from God and struggling for peace. He was not yet consciously one of the flock of Christ. His feet were not yet firmly planted on the narrow way. His companions would have kept him on the broad road of godless indifference, but such companionship he perceives to be "adverse to true friendship." And who can doubt the wisdom of this conclusion? Probably one of the most common and most fatal dangers to which a young man is exposed is that which arises from the allurements of those whom it seems unchivalrous and unamiable to deny. "My son," says Solomon, "when sinners entice thee consent thou not," and the counsel is never more needed than when the "*sinner*s" are cheerful and high-spirited com-

panions. Such a crisis becomes a test of courage. If the courage is strong enough to lead to the desire only to *appear* brave and manly, a youth is lost.

Woolman's was of another kind. He had the courage to disregard his companions' reproaches. He *dared* to avow that he was afraid of sin; and he conquered.

In God's good providence Woolman was helped forward in his spiritual life by the painful discipline of sickness. He narrates that then did darkness, horror, and amazement with full force seize him. He thought it would have been better if he had never been born. He was "filled with confusion, and of great affliction both of mind and body," and he "lay and bewailed" himself. But at length, "in the multitude of God's mercies," he "found inward relief, and a close engagement" that if he were restored he would walk humbly before God. And truly he carried out this "engagement" if ever man did. But for a while after his recovery he still associated with "wanton young people," and "to exceed in vanity, and to promote mirth was his chief study." Though he was "not so hardy as to commit things scandalous," he felt that he lost ground, and until he was eighteen his inward life passed through a varied and fluctuating experience. At length,

"through the merciful continuance of heavenly visitations," he "was made to bow down in spirit before the Lord." He then "sought deserts and lonely places, and there with tears did confess my sins to God," and ere long the haven of peace was reached. He followed truth, he lived under the cross, and he says, "I found my heavenly Father to be merciful to me beyond what I can express."

We shall do well to notice three features in the story of his conversion which stand out very prominently. First, during the ebb and flow of his religious feeling, he did not let go the means and helps of spiritual progress. He read books likely to be of profit to him ; he attended the "meeting" of the Society, and he never gave up the habit of prayer. Secondly, he broke off, evidently at very great cost of feeling, from frivolous acquaintances ; and, thirdly, he betook himself to frequent solitude. He saw that religious decision and spiritual peace were to be desired, and he did not languidly wait for them to come ; he resolutely set himself to their attainment, and his heavenly Father more than met the best desires of His young servant.

The practice of withdrawing into solitude at times was one he observed throughout life, and he derived from it the highest benefit. In this habit he was in good company, even in the best *of all*. We cannot tell whether he knew anything

of the asceticism of Jerome, or of the Romish custom of "Retreat;" but he knew that God had met Moses in the desert; he was familiar with the grand history of the lonely prophet Elijah. He often dwelt in spirit with John the Baptist "crying in the wilderness," and his faith drew its support from Jesus as it accompanied Him, not only when He went about doing good, but as He spent many silent watches in the shades and solitudes of the Mount of Olives.

In these days of high-pressure activity the soul that would be spiritually strong greatly needs the refreshment that can be ministered to it by nothing so well as by quiet hours of communion with itself and with God. Society is unmerciful to itself. Crowds of thoughtless people seem bent upon doing away with every possible opportunity for quiet meditation. Is it that men dare not stop and think, but are like the man depicted by Coleridge, who—

"having once turned round, walks on
And turns no more his head
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread"?

Whether the restrictions imposed by the law upon the first day of the week demand relaxation, and whether in the end any religious observance is

honoured or commended by being enforced, are questions we need not discuss ; but this is certain, that he who surrenders to the imperious demands of business or to the alluring invitations of pleasure hours that his spiritual nature deeply needs for converse with his own soul, is inflicting upon himself an irreparable injury. Woolman lived "under the shadow of the Almighty," because he had learned to dwell "in the secret place of the Most High."

Until he was twenty-one years of age, John Woolman lived with his parents, working on their "Plantation." It is quite evident that he had a taste for reading, and he had enjoyed some opportunities for cultivating it. He had made a good use of his schooling, and his was not a case of neglected education. He was not, like his illustrious contemporary, Benjamin Franklin, a young hero, who in the face of great difficulties, had succeeded in climbing the hill of knowledge. Woolman was not self-taught. He had received such schooling as the neighbourhood afforded, but while he was employed with his father, he had kept up and increased all he knew. When he left home he was well qualified, both as to attainment and character, for a position requiring energy and trust.

When he came of age, he engaged himself, with

his father's consent, to a man who owned a shop at a place called Mount Holly, about five miles from Woolman's home, and six miles from that of the proprietor. It was Woolman's duty to "tend shop and keep books." The sole responsibility rested upon him. In the day time he saw much company. Like a wise man he foresaw the dangers to which he would be liable, and he prepared for them in the best possible way. He says that at home he had lived retired, "and now having a prospect of being much in the way of company, I felt frequent and fervent cries in my heart to God, the Father of mercies, that He would preserve me from all taint and corruption ; that, in this more public employment, I might serve Him, my gracious Redeemer, in that humility and self-denial which I had in a small degree exercised in a more private life."

His youthful companions visited him at his new abode, supposing, or at any rate, hoping "that vanities would be as agreeable to him as ever." After a while these acquaintances fell off, and others, "whose conversation was helpful," gathered round him. A young man will generally find companions to his taste. The wise and the foolish alike are ready to receive him. They will say, "cast in thy lot among us," or "come with us and we will do thee good," and the cases will be very few in which

a youth will find himself without countenance and fellowship, when once his decision is made, whether for good or ill.

After a period of about two years, Woolman's master (whose name is never once mentioned) came to live at the shop. Up to that time Woolman, though having many visitors in the day, was left very much alone during the evenings and the night. On one occasion a curious circumstance broke the monotony of this solitude. "In a few months after I came here, my master bought several Scotchmen servants from on board a vessel, and brought them to Mount Holly to sell, one of whom was taken sick and died. In the latter part of the sickness, being delirious, he used to curse and swear most sorrowfully ; and the next night after his burial, I was left to sleep alone in the chamber where he died. I perceived in me a timorousness ; I knew, however, I had not injured the man, but assisted in taking care of him according to my capacity. I was not free to ask any one, on that occasion, to sleep with me. Nature was feeble ; but every trial was a fresh incitement to give myself up wholly to the service of God, for I found no helper like Him in times of trouble." Who these Scotchmen were, does not appear. They may have been captives taken in one of the battles between England and the Pretender, *and then shipped to America as exiles ; or they may*

have been Highlanders kidnapped by shipowners, for supplying the labour market. And people deeply in debt, or for any reasons desiring to get away from their native land, as well as prisoners of war, were often, in those days, transferred to the continent of the west, and sold into slavery. That Woolman, in common with many Friends, believed in the possibility of apparitions we shall see hereafter, and he seems to have expected that the ghost of the profane and unfortunate Scotchman would appear. But whatever degree of "timorousness" he may have perceived in himself, it certainly shows no "timorousness," but a spirit of quiet, truthful courage to narrate such an incident.

The business increased under Woolman's superintendence, but it considerably changed its character, and grew to be rather comprehensive and miscellaneous. In addition to "shopkeeping"—which we may presume means keeping a general store—baking and tailoring formed part of the business. Woolman made the resolve, and this when he was but twenty-three years of age, "to pursue," as he says, "worldly business no further than as truth opened my way." To this principle he adhered most faithfully, and it led him to restrict business to very narrow limits. We should notice and ponder his deliberate decision. He chose with Mary "the better part," and the resolve *not to be* "cumbered" with the cares of this

world, was to him a powerful principle and a rule of life. It does not appear that he renounced great riches. Perhaps he might never have been a rich man. He had not been shown "all the kingdoms of the world," and refused them for the sake of serving God and his fellow-men. He did not literally leave his net, his farm, or his merchandise, and embrace absolute poverty to follow Christ. But he caught the spirit and trod in the footsteps of the Apostles with rare unselfishness. He heard the call of Christ, and he resolved to obey, and to separate himself as far as possible from all earthly cares. Hence he says he began to be "thoughtful about some other way of business ; perceiving merchandise to be attended with much cumber in the way of trading in these parts." The following beautiful passage in the Journal, in spite of the fact that it stands in marked contrast to some of the most popular ideas and counsels of the present day, deserves our best attention.

"My mind, through the power of truth, was in a good degree weaned from the desire of outward greatness, and I was learning to be content with real conveniences, that were not costly ; so that a way of life free from much entanglement appeared best for me, though the income might be small. I had several offers of business that appeared *profitable*, but I did not see my way clear to accept

of them, as believing they would be attended with more outward care and cumber than was required of me to engage in. I saw that an humble man, with the blessing of the Lord, might live on a little ; and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving ; but that commonly with an increase of wealth, the desire of wealth increased. There was a care on my mind so to pass my time, that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the true Shepherd."

Woolman's employer had in his service a man capable of teaching tailoring. Woolman believed that by following this calling, he might earn a sufficient living, "without the load of great business." He accordingly learned of the man, and he tells us, "I was taught to be content with it, though I felt at times a disposition that would have sought for something higher." Soon afterwards he parted from his employer, and set up as a tailor and draper on his own account, and he never aspired to be anything higher in the ranks of secular emulation.

For a time he continued to retail goods, as well as to follow his trade as a tailor ; but in 1756 this was given up, for he says that about that time "I grew uneasy on account of my business growing too cumbersome. I had begun with selling trimmings

for garments, and from thence proceeded to sell cloths and linens ; and at length, having got a considerable shop of goods, my trade increased every year, and the way to large business appeared open, but I felt a stop in my mind."

He therefore resolved again to lessen his business, and he told his customers of his intention, so that they might consider what other shop they should turn to, and in a while, and not without "strife" in his mind, he quite gave up merchandise and followed tailoring alone.

He believed truth required him to live free from "outward cumber." He held that the disciples of Christ should be particularly careful to have their minds redeemed from the love of wealth, and "their outward affairs in as little room as may be," that no temporal concerns may entangle their affections.

Following such considerations as these, he evidently did not regard it his duty to make any provision for his old age, and as providence ordered it, there was no necessity. But not a shade of anxiety ever crossed his mind from that direction. The future was in better hands than his. He would take no thought for the morrow ; he could trust his Heavenly Father for everything the morrow might require. With the same high confidence he did not seek to endow his *children* with fortunes, or to leave them handsome

legacies. He left them "a good name," which is "rather to be chosen than great riches"—a sentiment which Woolman thoroughly believed, but which is now not very popular.

Woolman clearly had no faith at all in great wealth as an agent for doing good. Sometimes we wish to be rich, and we think that if only we had command of wealth, we should use the talent unselfishly. We fancy it would prove in our hands an enchanter's wand, and we should wave it so that the poor, the disappointed, the oppressed might be blessed. But there is a more excellent way, and we are to covet earnestly the best gifts. It is not by common might, nor by human power, but by the spirit of the Lord that good work is done. The whole history of the Christian church has verified this. The founder of the church became poor, not as throwing away what might have benefited us, but for our sakes. Every one of the Apostles was a poor man, and the purest, strongest, and most aggressive days of the church have been her poorest. The wise Lord has need of all of every rank, from Solomon to John the Baptist, but we remember that it was not the king, arrayed in all his glory, but the prophet of the hairy coat that was the greatest born of women, and nearest to the Saviour of the World.

There was, however, another reason which must

be named, and which Woolman frequently refers to as having great power with him in checking all desire to extend business. He was convinced that men worked far harder than ever their Creator intended. He saw that a vast deal of toil was occasioned by the excessive craving for luxury. If mankind would live more simply, they would be, to a great extent, rescued from the exactions of grinding, and even degrading labour. He remarks, "Though trading in things useful is an honest employ, yet through the great number of superfluities, which are bought and sold, and through the corruption of the times, they who apply to merchandise for a living, have great need to be well experienced in that precept, which the prophet Jeremiah laid down for his scribe: 'Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.'"

Woolman saw nothing of that fierce competition, and that canonizing of unmitigated selfishness with which we of the present day are only too familiar; but none the less are his views and conduct, that have been noticed, deserving of our serious study and imitation. Of course there may be the extreme of indolent contentment. A want of enterprise may spring from a feeble and guilty apathy. What we do, we are to do with our might; and we are to be diligent in business. But to aim at the accumulation of wealth as the end of life, is to worship

mammon and not God. We are constantly exhorted to "get on" in life. Self-made men, that is, men who have risen from obscurity, and have amassed large fortunes, are exhibited to us as the heroes of society, whom all young men should emulate. Their patience, their sobriety, their integrity, their penetration, their calculating forethought, their sacrifice of temporary pleasure to ultimate profit, their alacrity in seizing the right moment of action, their unswerving ambition, constitute a cluster of qualities of more or less real worth, which win the approbation of the world and which command success. Such characteristics may sometimes be combined with the Divine element of life. Entire godlessness is not perhaps an essential to an ambitious character. High spiritual principle may possibly not always stand in the way of determined self-advancement. We sometimes see a truly christian career attended with worldly prosperity, and certainly there are many qualities which successful men assiduously cultivate, that cannot be absent from a consecrated christian life. But to teach youth that the highest ideal of life is commercial success, or that the rewards of high principle are to be looked for in social distinctions, is to convey a doctrine that has nothing whatever in it of the religion of Christ, and is absolutely powerless for the elevation of mankind.



CHAPTER III.

The Christian Ministry—Preaching—Counsels to Ministers—
Itinerary Labours—Slavery.

WOOLMAN very soon became a Christian minister. Amongst the "Friends" the doctrine as to the Christian ministry is one of great simplicity. They hold that, all true knowledge in things spiritual, is revealed by the light and the gift of God. By this light alone, every true minister of the Gospel is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry. By the same light, every evangelist and Christian pastor ought to be ordered in his work, and to be led as to the place where, the persons to whom, and the time wherein he is to minister. This authority it is that constrains men to preach; and if they possess the divine gift, they must preach without any further commission or qualification. If men are lacking in this authority, however fully in other respects they may be *commissioned*, they are but impostors and deceivers.

The gift is to be used freely without hire or bargaining, though if a man is called from his trade, it may be lawful for him to receive such "temporals" as are needful for meat and clothing, as may be given him freely by those to whom he communicates "spirituals."

Woolman was in complete harmony with these views. He believed he had the Divine "gift," and he was moved by the Spirit to speak to his fellow men on the highest and deepest of all themes. He spoke, not because he was asked to do so, or was appointed to "a living," or to earn his daily bread, but simply because he felt the inward irresistible impulse, which was to him the power of the Divine Spirit. On the exercise of anything like laboured art in preaching, he writes thus:—"The natural man loveth eloquence, and many love to hear eloquent orations, and if there be not a careful attention to the gift, men who have once laboured in the pure Gospel ministry, growing weary of suffering, and ashamed of appearing weak, may kindle a fire, compass themselves about with sparks, and walk in the light, not of Christ who is under suffering, but of that fire which they in departing from the gift have kindled in order that those hearers, who have left the meek, suffering state for worldly wisdom, may be warmed with this fire, and speak highly of their labours. That which is of God,

gathers to God, and that which is of the world, is owned by the world." He spoke, not because he had to say something, but because he had something to say. He did not beat about a topic. He delivered a message when one was given him to deliver; when not, he held his tongue. He verified the experience of the Psalmist: "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue." And when the message had been given, there was an end of it. He forthwith went back to tailoring or store-keeping. He had no fixed preaching engagements to meet, for which, even when his mind might be a blank, he must present the semblance of being prepared. He recognised that he was called of God to go on tailoring till the call came again to go and preach. And of course on the same clear principle sometimes his sermons were short, and sometimes long. The Spirit told him to say a certain thing, not to fill up a certain amount of time, and when he had said it, he had done. He writes: "The work of the ministry being a work of Divine love, I feel that the openings thereof are to be waited for in all our appointments."

Woolman's first attempt, however, to speak in a Christian assembly was very discouraging. He "went to meetings" in what he calls "*an awful frame of mind*," and "one day being under a strong

exercise of spirit," he stood up and spoke. With charming candour he adds : "but not keeping close to the Divine opening, I said more than was required of me." Whether only his own heart told him this, or whether some honest brother acted the part of monitor, we are not informed. In either case Woolman "was afflicted in mind some weeks, without any light or comfort." But God sent the Comforter." He felt forgiveness for his offence, but he did not try again for six weeks. At the end of that time "feeling the spring of Divine love opened, and a concern to speak," he made another attempt and found peace. His comment upon this incident is most suggestive, and may well be pondered by every minister of the Gospel :—"Being thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure Spirit, which inwardly moves upon the heart, and which taught me to wait in silence, sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to His flock."

The prevalence of Woolman's views on the Christian ministry would be a revolution throughout our churches, and would give to the preaching of the Gospel a reality and a force, that would almost render it a new message to mankind. Sermonising,

as a trade, would be over ; preaching, as a power, would re-begin. A vast number of preachers would be silenced altogether. Many more, if they were to "keep to the Divine opening," would be limited to occasional and distant exhortations. That the Christian church would be benefited by such a condition, will be thought extremely probable by many. If a class of recognised teachers and of ministers, devoting themselves to a fixed congregation, are necessities in our present state of society, there does not seem to be any reason for the exclusion of such free unconventional methods as those which are illustrated in the Christian work of the "Friends," and with singular vividness in the history of John Woolman. The two kinds of ministry might very well exist together.

If ever a man was a faithful minister of Christ, Woolman was. But he was never "ordained" in the usual meaning of the word. He had no college training, or any other human preparation for the ministry. He was employed and maintained by no society securing to him a living, and requiring certain service. Like Paul the tent maker, he continued his daily labour, humbly and contentedly by his own hands ministering to his necessities. His lofty idea of the Christian ministry is admirably expressed : "All the faithful are not called to the *public ministry* ; but who ever are, are called to

minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. The outward modes of worship are various; but whenever any are true ministers of Jesus Christ, it is from the operation of His Spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them, and thus giving them a just sense of the conditions of others. This truth was early fixed on my mind, and I was taught to watch the pure opening, and to take heed lest, while I was standing to speak, my own will should get uppermost, and cause me to utter words from worldly wisdom, and depart from the channel of the true gospel ministry."

However much he regarded the call of the Holy Spirit as the one qualification for the ministry, he did not neglect the study of Scripture. It must, however, be admitted that some of his interpretations are very far fetched. But the loftiness of his views, and the consistency of his conduct in relation to the ministry were conspicuous. Indeed the whole of his Journal may be regarded as a solemn and beautiful charge to ministers. Every young man in any walk of life would do well to read it, but for those contemplating the ministry, it is a book more calculated than almost any other we know to inspire the spirit of humility, self-sacrifice, and consecration. Among his last words he tells us that during his visit to England "I have felt some instructions sealed on my mind, which I am con-

cerned to leave in writing for the use of such as are called to the station of a minister of Christ." And such "instructions" he obeyed, and he has given a few pages that come from his own soul, and prove him to have been a "bishop" in the true and apostolic sense of the term. Though his maintenance was guaranteed by no society, and he delivered his message on no man's authority, he usually, as was the custom, received a certificate of introduction and approval from the monthly meeting of the Friends. But he went under the impulse, and relying on the support of the Spirit of the Lord. He reminds us more of the Apostle Paul than of modern missionaries. He threw himself upon the hospitality of the Friends he visited, and upon his own limited resources. Like the great Apostle he rejoiced that he had learned in whatever state he was therewith to be content. He cared only to have enough, and enough for him was very little indeed. His first effort in the exercise of that faculty of loving speech, which so wonderfully characterised him, appears to have been made before he was sensible of having received a Divine call to the ministry. It arose in connection with that wide-spread vice which still rests like a nightmare upon the church and the world. The monster *intemperance* tyrannised in New England as well as in the mother country. Woolman tells us

how he endeavoured to deal with it, and his example as seen in the spirit of beautiful and humble earnestness that breathes in the following little story, may be commended to some of our ardent temperance brethren:—"About the time called Christmas, I observed many people, both in town and from the country, resorting to public-houses, and spending their time in drinking and vain sports, tending to corrupt one another, on which account I was much troubled. At one home in particular there was much disorder, and I believed it was a duty incumbent on me to speak to the master of that house. I considered I was young, and that several elderly Friends in town had opportunity to see these things; but though I would gladly have been excused, yet I could not feel my mind clear.

"The exercise was heavy; and as I was reading what the Almighty said to Ezekiel, respecting his duty as a watchman, the matter was set home more clearly. With prayers and tears I besought the Lord for His assistance, and He, in loving kindness, gave me a resigned heart. At a suitable opportunity I went to the public-house, and seeing the man among much company, I called him aside, and in the fear and dread of the Almighty, expressed to him what rested on my mind. He took it kindly, and afterwards showed more regard to me than before. In a few years afterwards he died, middle

aged ; and I often thought that had I neglected my duty in that case, it would have given me great trouble ; and I was humbly thankful to my gracious Father, who had supported me herein." Here is no arrogant self-righteousness, no Pharisaical display of superiority, no bluster or brag. But how persuasive, and how successful. The result was happy as regards his own peace of mind, as well as in regard to those who were the subjects of his expostulation. In his Journal, under the year 1756, he has some good remarks on the vice of excessive drinking, called forth by his observing the very great quantities of rum that are every year consumed in the colonies. He says, "When men take pleasure in feeling their minds elevated with strong drink, and so indulge their appetite as to disorder their understandings, neglect their duty as members of a family or civil society, and cast off all regard to religion, their case is much to be pitied. And where those whose lives are for the most part regular, and whose examples have a strong influence on the mind of others, adhere to some customs which powerfully draw to the use of more strong liquor than pure wisdom allows, it hinders the spreading of the spirit of meekness, and strengthens the hands of the more excessive drinkers. This is a case to be lamented." Dealing in rum had been at first a *part of his* business, but as soon as his conscience

perceived the evil, he gave up the trade and records his regret that he had ever had anything to do with it. He would not strain his convictions to favour his own interests; he constantly gave up his own interests in favour of his convictions. His life-long anxiety was to be on the side of truth, not to have truth on his side. Where truth led, there would he follow.

Woolman's first direct contact with slavery shows us his character in a very striking manner. It may be remembered that it was after he had committed an act of cruelty upon some birds that kindness to animals became a fixed principle with him which he never forgot. His conscience awoke and smote him. His repentance was deep, and his resolve to sin no more was irrevocable. From the hour of his conversion, on the particular case, there was no more indecision, no looking back. A similar experience befell him in regard to slavery. His employer had a negro woman whom he sold. Woolman was instructed to write out the bill of sale while the purchaser waited. He did so; but he was immediately seized with mental affliction, and sophistries, with which he might have tried to justify himself, proved ineffective. He thereupon boldly avowed that he believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion, and that therefore he could be no party to it. His

resolution was soon put to the test. A man wanted a conveyance of a slave written out, and Woolman declined to do it, and never again took any part whatever in such a transaction. But it was often very difficult to refuse. A sick man once sent to him to have his will made. It appeared that he held slaves whom he intended leaving to his children. Woolman would not make the will, though writing was "a profitable employ," and though his refusal gave offence. From this incident he says he "had fresh confirmation that acting contrary to present outward interests, from a motive of Divine love and in regard to truth and righteousness, and thereby incurring the resentments of people, opens the way to a treasure better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men." On another occasion "an ancient man of good esteem" came to get his will written. He owned negroes, and he proposed leaving them to his son. Woolman declined the office, but a few years afterwards the man came again on the same errand. He hoped for success because in the interval his son, formerly a libertine, had become a changed and virtuous character. This of course did not remove Woolman's objection. They had much friendly talk on the subject, and then deferred it. A few days afterwards the man came again, having directed the freedom of his slaves. Woolman then made his will. On

yet another occasion a neighbour, who had been badly hurt, sent for Woolman to bleed him, which he accordingly did. The patient then asked Woolman to write his will, telling him to which of his children he gave a young negro girl. Woolman wrote the will, but left out the part about the negress. He then told the sick man what he had done, and said he would make no charge for the work. They "had a serious conference on the subject," and it resulted in the girl being set free. Such incidents as these were far from uncommon, and were received with deep gratitude and encouragement.

Slavery had been in existence among the New England settlers just a hundred years at Woolman's birth, for it was in the year 1620 that a cargo of twenty negroes was landed at James Town, from a Dutch trading vessel. These negroes became the slaves of the colonists. By a strange coincidence that year was the very year in which the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth rock. It was as though an angel of light and an angel of darkness descended simultaneously on the New England shore. The conflict began at once, and there was never peace between them. It has ended only in our own day, and its last struggle was a terrible and a bloody war.

We cannot, with any superior virtue, lay blame upon the Dutch. Our own countrymen, on this side the Atlantic, were equally guilty. Though

slavery had disappeared from England, the slave trade was actively carried on by English enterprise and under the English flag. England had been a great slave-owning power as far back as 1562. In that year Sir John Hawkins had first interested England in the iniquitous traffic. Queen Elizabeth had entered eagerly into the speculation for the sake of its great profits, and had become a most energetic slave trader. Throughout the 17th century, others had followed her example with equal zeal, and by the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, the trade in our fellow creatures received a fresh impulse, and became a central object of English policy.

The Friends, like all other people, were implicated in slavery, if not in the importation of negroes. George Fox visited Barbadoes in 1671, and it is evident he cherished a strong objection to slavery. But he could not venture to advise immediate emancipation. He regarded the slaves as quite unfit for freedom; and he felt that to give them freedom would only make their last state worse than their first. His advice therefore was to train the negroes as wisely and as kindly as possible, and then, having thus fitted them for freedom, to bestow it on them without further delay. These views had great effect. In 1688, three years before the death of Fox, the congregation of Friends in Grahams

Town sent a protest against slavery to the annual meeting of the Society in Philadelphia, and the feeling against slavery never ceased amongst the Quakers till the great end was achieved.

William Penn employed slave labour, and it does not appear that he aimed by any legislation to abolish slavery, but he heartily shared the views of Fox, and he treated his slaves as members of his family. Down to Woolman's time Friends commonly held slaves, and Woolman regarded it as his mission to lead them to give up the practice. Others had urged upon the Friends the inconsistency of slave owning with the profession of Christianity, and at some of their yearly meetings slavery had been condemned, but it is to John Woolman that the noble work of having thoroughly aroused the conscience of the community of the Quakers is due. He began the work when he was twenty-two years of age, and he laid it down only with his death. No enterprise could seem more hopeless, but this was a side of the subject Woolman did not allow to weigh with him. He furnished a remarkable instance of the maxim, "He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap." It was for him simply to labour in the vineyard, and so he goes on gladly bearing the burden and heat of the day, and never making his mind anxious by futile enquiries

and calculations as to how much success was discoverable.

On the 5th of September, 1743, Woolman accompanied his friend, Abraham Farrington, on a short missionary tour through East Jersey. At many of the meetings Woolman was silent, and when he spoke "it was with much care," so that he might speak "only what truth opened." His "ancient companion," as he calls him, "was engaged to preach largely in the love of the Gospel." They were away a fortnight. Probably they travelled on foot. Brissot, the author of "New Travels in America," says that Woolman always travelled on foot; this, however, is a mistake. The Journal shows that by far the greater number of his journeys were taken on horseback. When he went on foot he notes it as quite an exception. His next journey was with his beloved friend, Isaac Andrews. Woolman "found an enlargement of Gospel love" in his own mind, and "a concern to visit Friends in some of the back settlements of Pennsylvania and Virginia." Andrews had "drawings" to the same places, with the addition of Maryland and Carolina, so they set out together, having first "opened the case" to the monthly meeting, and obtained certificates to travel as companions. They evidently had to "rough it," for a great part of the journey was *travelling* through the wilderness; but if the best

entertainment that could be given them seemed coarse, it became "the disciples of Christ to be therewith content." And so the two friends went on gladly, not at all lamenting that they were required to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It is curious and instructive to compare the map in an old atlas of the district through which they passed, with the map of the same States in the present day. Where Woolman and his companion slept in woods, with their horses feeding near them, there have arisen large towns tied together by the iron bands of the railways. They were away a little more than three months. They "travelled in harmony, and parted in the nearness of true brotherly love."

It was during this journey that one of the most important and difficult questions that he was ever required to entertain was forced upon his attention. The question was, what ought to be his relation to slave-owners who were kind enough to welcome him to their homes. He says, "When I ate, drank, and lodged free-cost with the people who lived in ease on the hard labour of their slaves, I felt uneasy ; and as my mind was inward to the Lord, I found this uneasiness return upon me, at times, through the whole visit." He did not allow hospitality to destroy his faithfulness. He held frequent conversation with the owners on the subject. To a man

of his sensitive nature the constant alternative was peculiarly trying. Either he must reward kindness and hospitality by the appearance of churlishness, or he must be silent when conscience urged him to deliver his testimony against an evil that was "as a dark gloominess hanging over the land." Woolman did not waver, but his gentleness of manner, his manifest unselfishness, and his genuine consistency disarmed resentment, and it is surprising how little offence he gave and how much esteem he won by expostulations offered to those at whose houses he stayed. He reasons out the matter in his Journal, and his deep anxiety to avoid saving his own money, and receiving a gift from "the gain of oppression," and at the same time to avoid even the appearance of self-conceit and of incivility is the occasion of much inward conflict. Sometimes he adopted the following ingenious contrivance : "When I expected soon to leave a Friend's house where I had entertainment, if I believed that I should not keep clear from the gain of oppression without leaving money, I spoke to one of the heads of the family privately, and desired them to accept of those pieces of silver, and give them to such of their negroes as they believed would make the best use of them ; and at other times I gave them to the negroes myself, as the way looked clearest to me. Before I came out *I had provided a large number of small pieces for*

this purpose, and thus offering them to some who appeared to be wealthy people, was a trial both to me and them. But the fear of the Lord so covered me at times that my way was made easier than I expected ; and few, if any, manifested any resentment at the offer, and most of them, after some conversation, accepted of them."

We have in this a specimen of moral courage of an uncommon and much needed kind. The man who could act thus was a prophet indeed, and every thing he might say in remonstrance concerning the evil he saw would come home to those he addressed with double force when supported by such simple and manifestly self-denying consistency.

It was after his second journey that he wrote a pamphlet on "The keeping of Negroes." It was not published at once, and probably it would never have been published at all had it not been for the advice of the author's father, which we have already named. It was, however, made public in 1754, after examination and slight revision by some of Woolman's friends. A second part was printed in 1762. We need not in this day present Woolman's arguments against slavery and the slave trade. They were based on social, philanthropic, and scriptural grounds. He perceived the wide-spreading mischief that the system produced on slaveholders, leading to indolence, scorn, selfishness, and pride, and

altogether demoralising society. Woolman's heart was overwhelmed within him, but he is entirely free from invective and denunciation. He possessed the rare art of being able to censure without growing angry, and of speaking the truth but always in love. It must, however, be said that the injustice and cruelty inflicted upon slaves appear to have been slight in comparison with the horrors of after years. Quaker masters were certainly very different men from the Southern planters of a recent time who, as they saw abolition approaching, abandoned by degrees all treatment of their slaves but that which was prompted by the barest selfishness.

But Woolman saw enough to fill his soul with compassion. He saw that in many cases no care was taken to promote lawful marriages amongst the negroes. On estates changing hands, which was of frequent occurrence, husbands and wives were unfeelingly separated. Labourers at work in the fields were followed by a man with a whip. Food was dealt out to the unhappy creatures with a niggard hand; they were wretchedly clad, and if they committed any fault, severe punishment followed. To teach them, or indeed to make any attempt to ameliorate or improve their condition, was discouraged, if not absolutely forbidden. The Quakers were, beyond all comparison, the kindest *masters* of the time, but Woolman is none the less

impressed with the essential injustice of the system. The unfortunate blacks had made no agreement to serve their white masters ; they had done nothing to forfeit their liberty ; they are held in bondage by force. Yet men, not of the same tint of skin as ourselves, are nevertheless our brethren. God has made us of one blood. We are the same species. We are similar in the beginning of life, in diseases, in sufferings, in joys, and hopes and fears. There is one death for us all, and one judgment. Hence, Woolman preached the doctrine that the superior race owed a duty to the inferior, and that the sense of superiority must not become a temptation leading to selfishness and oppression. We have to answer for our conduct towards all who are in our power, or within the range of our influence. To oppress the weak is to incur the anger of the Almighty God, before whom all men are powerless. The negro is made capable of knowing, loving, and serving God, and to trample on the best part of his nature, is a crime both against God and man. Christ died for us all, and wherever His Gospel is understood, it is seen that He came "to give deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bound."

One of the strongest motives with Woolman was the consideration that the love of God is universal, and that ours should be as nearly as can be like His. This argument of love is the one on which

Woolman constantly relies. Scripture incidents, supposed to be favourable to some form of slavery, are discussed. Sophistries are dealt with from time to time, as he meets with them, but it is to the broad, safe ground of Christ-like love to our fellow man that he constantly comes back. Some of his arguments we might perhaps criticise, but his loving spirit was his real power.

It is worth while observing how the evil in the world becomes the means of cultivating and truly *educating* the soul of a good man. When the heart, filled with love to Christ, is proof against the grosser forms of iniquity, its contact with these evils can only deepen its aversion. "Horror," said the Psalmist, "hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law." In contrast with the light given to him, and with the Divine presence which is his joy and glory, the true-hearted servant of God is able to see sin in its undisguised repulsiveness. He is thus led to look inward, and to feel and to recoil from the sin within himself. The desire to become perfectly cleansed from it deepens as he views its deadly and wide-spread contamination. He knows that he is touched with the same deadly disease. He sees what he himself might have become, and he is driven in close to the Perfect One for safety and for shelter. The selfish ease-loving man, who avoids direct contact with the

sorrowful and the oppressed, cuts himself off from some of the highest sources of spiritual blessing. There is a great deal of cheap philanthropy in the world. Many reputable Christian men have no more connection with suffering, not actually forced upon them, than consists in now and then drawing a cheque, or putting a contribution into the collecting box. They may do this extensively, and obtain a high reputation for benevolence, though they have never entered the home of the poor, and never listened to the accents of distress. Their benevolence is of the second order; at any rate it is not of the first. There is a danger lest it minister to a spirit of self-complacency, in which the spark of Divine charity is entirely quenched.

When the sight of the world's misery leads to earnest practical duty—when it awakens a burning zeal, and is not suffered to evaporate in a mere idle sentiment, it brings the soul into sympathy with the compassion, and the labours, and the self-sacrifice of the Saviour of the world; and though no man can see more than a small fragment of the world's sin, there may be some appreciation of its depth, its width, its contaminating and deadly nature, and of the supreme difficulty of dealing with it. To learn thus to take our station as near as may be at the Divine standpoint in viewing sin, is of itself a spiritual education. It is to become an apprentice

to the Lord, and to enter into His Spirit, and method, and aims, while joining in his work. Woolman's journal shows the progress of a soul going on from strength to strength, and shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Ever full of compassion, and waiting for the call as though "with his loins girt, and his lamp burning," Woolman, soon after his return from the second missionary journey, "found drawings" in his mind to make another tour in New England. This time he went with Peter Andrews, a brother of his former companion. They visited Long Island. At Oyster Bay, they held services "to be thankfully remembered," "through the springing up of living waters." This mission became, to a great extent, one to the Presbyterians, who in considerable numbers colonised Connecticut. One result of this visit was that many young men were led to greater religious earnestness. They took up the cross of Christ, and as they "stood steadfast to that inward conviction, they were made a blessing to some of their former companions." During this journey they rode, on horseback, about fifteen hundred miles, and sailed about a hundred and fifty. His companion, he says, "was about thirteen years older than I, bore the heaviest burden, and was an instrument of the greatest use." They were away from home four months, and what became of

Woolman's business during that time, is not stated. In fact, the business of his life was to preach the Gospel, especially in its bearing upon slavery, and if any one had asked him how he expected his trade to prosper if he thus neglected it, he might have answered in the language of the youthful Jesus :—
“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”

He soon made another journey, extending this time to six weeks. He went through portions of Delaware and Maryland, one John Sykes being his companion. They rode about five hundred and fifty miles. Again, in a little while, he felt “drawings” in his mind to visit the upper part of West Jersey, and soon afterwards he went with John Sykes again for a fortnight through Bucks County. He undertook a great many other journeys nearer home, or at a distance which it is not necessary to particularise. He did not imitate the man who said, “I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” His missionary expeditions were continued as zealously after his marriage as before. We should judge him to have been poorly equipped for his work. He often, like Jacob of Bethel, slept with the sky as the curtains of his couch, and he found that numerous mosquitoes and damp ground were harder to endure than a stony pillow. He says that once, “in the woods, we were under some disadvantage—having

no fireworks, nor bells for our horses." Yet when narrating such incidents, all his thought is on the "gifts" and the good things which he continually receives from his Heavenly Father. His grateful spirit ever felt that it was enough, and more than enough, for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord, and his Lord was the carpenter's son, who had not where to lay His head, and who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor."





CHAPTER IV.

Jack-of-all-Trades—Views on War, Small-Pox, and Inoculation—Visions—Witchcraft—Pastimes—Oaths—Luxury.

THE comparatively primitive condition of society in the States at that time is well illustrated in the circumstance that Woolman had to turn his hand, as occasion offered, to a vast variety of occupations, and that he does so without the slightest consciousness that there is anything remarkable in it. He wrote his father's will, and appears often to have done the same office for other people. On one occasion we find him bleeding a neighbour who had received a bad bruise, and when the surgical performance was over, the injured man asked Woolman to make his will. Thus, though tailoring was his only regular trade, and preaching the Gospel of freedom his great mission, he was so business-like, so good natured, and above all so thoroughly trustworthy, that men looked to him for help in all sorts of miscellaneous matters. He verified the principle that "Godliness is profitable

for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come ;" not profiting this life in any pecuniary reward it brought to its possessor, but in the far higher sense of being greatly beneficial to those with whom he had to do.

It will interest us to notice Woolman's views on some of those questions which still provoke division amongst us. On almost all of them Quaker sentiment has been remarkably consistent. Many of them have been in part, if not altogether, adopted by modern society. Such views, for example, as Woolman held on the lawfulness of war are now widely advocated. At the time of which we are speaking the colonies were in a severe conflict. "From a disagreement between the powers of England and France, it was now a time of trouble on this continent." The Quakers felt it their duty "to cease from those national contests which are productive of misery and bloodshed," and to repose themselves "in the munition of that rock, which all these shakings shall not move, even in the knowledge and feeling of the eternal power of God."

A question that greatly perplexed Woolman arose in his mind in connection with the war, and he was not alone in his difficulty. Riding with a friend one day, who appears to have joined Woolman for the purpose of discussing the subject, they exchanged views. His companion had chosen rather to suffer

detractment upon his goods than pay the war tax. It had been a heavy trial to him to do this, as he had stood quite alone in his action, and had incurred the displeasure of his friends. Woolman does not at this time give us his own conclusion on the subject. He heard that Friends in England paid such taxes, and having "conversation with several noted Friends on the subject, who all favoured the payment of such taxes," and whose opinion he preferred before his own, he was kept at ease for a time, though in the depth of his mind there was a scruple which he could never get over, and which at times caused him great distress.

Was there ever more than *one* being of human form who never doubted how he should act? He alone who was the true Light was free from moral and intellectual indecision. And He saw by the force of spiritual insight, not as the result of laboured calculation, or by skilful dissection of sophistries, or by the power of an irresistible logic. But the holiest of His disciples have often been troubled by this inability of instant decision, and it has pained them in the degree of the spiritual sensitiveness of their nature. They cannot hastily and rudely dash to a conclusion. They cannot with swift and ready indolence forego the trouble of painful consideration. They must seek, and pray, and walk carefully lest they fall. But if in this

spirit they "wait for light," they shall soon be able to rejoice that the darkness has passed. "To the righteous there ariseth light in the darkness."

Woolman refused to pay the tax. He believed that the Spirit of truth required him, "as an individual, to suffer patiently the distress of goods, rather than pay actively." To refuse payment was "exceedingly disagreeable," but to do a thing contrary to his conscience "appeared yet more dreadful." Upright-hearted men whom he knew did not refuse payment, but their example must not weigh against the clear command of conscience.

The Quakers were then, and always have been, the opponents of war, and they suffered loss of power in consequence. During a considerable part of Woolman's life the country was at war, and at one time New Jersey—Woolman's State—was required to bring 1,000 men into the field. It was a long struggle between the French and English for supremacy in the enormous districts surrounding the great lakes. Some of the native Indians went with the French, others with the English. Woolman, in his journeys, was at times in danger from Indian scalping parties. But we may have occasion to refer to this again.

Woolman's decision not to pay the tax had a powerful effect. Up to that time the Friends do *not* appear to have taken a resolute stand, though

many of them had been very earnest in their protests. Woolman was the means of bringing about "a weighty conference in the fear of the Lord," and this very much quickened feeling on the subject. But to form what he regarded as the only Christian opinion on the subject was very difficult, for as he says, with undoubted truth, "It requires great self-denial and resignation of ourselves to God, to attain that state wherein we can freely cease from fighting when wrongfully invaded, if, by our fighting, there were a probability of overcoming the invaders."

On one occasion orders came to some officers in Mount Holly to prepare quarters for about a hundred soldiers. Woolman was required to take in two, and six shillings a week per man would be paid him by the government. The case was new and unexpected, and Woolman sat a time silent, "my mind," as he says, "being inward." At length he said that if the men came to his house, he believed they would be taken in, but he could receive no pay for them, and to this he adhered. The story of his conflict of mind on the subject of war is most instructive. He often doubted for a time how he should act, but self-interest appears to have had no voice in any decision, and as soon as he saw the truth there was no more hesitation as to his conduct. His earnest prayer to God in every-


thing was this :—"That setting aside all views of self-interest, and the friendship of this world, I might stand fully resigned to His Holy will." It was a prayer habitually offered, and it was answered with signal fulness.

Similar independence of mind, and conscientious action appears in relation to small pox, which was then a very prevalent disease. His sister, like Queen Mary, wife of William III., died of it, and it was the disease that proved so fatal to Woolman himself. When it broke out in the town he had to consider the question of inoculation, and to determine what his conduct should be. He looked on the disease as a message of the Almighty to assist in the cause of virtue, and to lead us to build suitable houses for ourselves, and for our dependent creatures, and to prepare suitable clothing, and convenient food. Attention should be directed to such things as these, and, if not engaged in business, the pursuit of luxury ought not to take us to houses where infection may be caught. His principle was, not to hazard health and life unless at the clear call of duty. His argument against inoculation, extensively practised in his day, is this :—If God had endowed men with understanding to prevent the disease by any harmless method, such method might lawfully be used, but if the arresting method is often injurious, *and sometimes fatal*, we are not entitled to employ

it. Probably Woolman would have taken sides with the anti-vaccinationist in the present day.

Another subject we may name is that of visions and the supernatural. Woolman was well versed in Quaker literature. He had read Fox's Journals, and, amongst many other works, Sewel's "History of the Friends." He notes in his Journal that a man whose character he must have venerated more perhaps than he did any other—George Fox, the founder of the Society—was a man given to seeing visions and dreaming dreams. The intense belief of Fox in the supernatural was accompanied by the conviction that he was the subject of special and direct communication from the spiritual world. When (*e.g.*) he was a prisoner in Lancaster Castle, in 1664, he had such a revelation. He was walking in his room, with his mind upon the Lord, when he saw the Lord's power turn against the Turk, at that time at war with Hungary, and visions that facts afterwards confirmed. At another time "he saw an extraordinary great light, and, looking up, he beheld an angel of the Lord, with a glittering sword stretched southward, which shone so bright as if the court had been all on fire." The fulfilment of this was understood to be seen in the war that not long after took place between England and Holland, and the breaking out of the pestilence in the city of London, and the destruction of the city by fire.

Fox seems unhesitatingly to have claimed the gift of prophecy. Many other Friends did the same. One George Bishop predicted the plague in a letter he addressed to Parliament. William Penn, the most illustrious of Fox's disciples, had similar supernatural experiences. Catherine Evans, whose history Sewel gives at considerable length, and with which Woolman must have been well acquainted, was the subject of a vision which it is worth while to give. Catherine had been drawn to go on a mission with Sarah Cheevers, to convert Roman Catholics and Turks. They fell into the clutches of the Inquisition, and were imprisoned in Malta. Expecting every day to be ordered to execution, "she saw in a dream in the night, a large room, and a great wood fire in the chimney, and she beheld one sitting in the chair by the fire, in the form of a servant, whom she took to be the Eternal Son of God; likewise she saw a very amiable well-favoured manchild, sitting in a hollow chair over the fire (not appearing to be above three quarters of a year old, and having no clothes on but a little fine linen about the upper parts), and the fire flamed about it; yet the child played and was merry. She would then have taken it up, for fear it should have been burnt; but He that sat in the chair bid her let it alone. Then turning about she saw an *angel*, and He that sat in the chair bid her take up



the child, which she did, and found it had no harm ; and then awaking, she told her dream to Sarah, and desired her not to fear since the heavenly host thus followed them." Sewel's history abounds in instances of supernatural visitation. It was commonly believed amongst the Friends that the judgments of God were foretold. Their belief in witchcraft and in satanic possession was general, if not universal, and they believed that they were not without the gift of miraculous healing. Brought up in such an atmosphere as this, it is no wonder that instances of marked supernatural influence are occasionally to be found in his Journal. John Woolman, like John the Baptist of whom he frequently reminds us, "did no miracle," nor do we find that he often gave utterance to any distinct prophecies ; though he did so at least on one occasion, which will presently be mentioned. But he believed he had special spiritual communications.

On the 13th of May, 1757, being in good health, and lodging at a Friend's house, in Burlington, he met with the following experience :—"Going to bed about the time usual with me, I awoke in the night, and my meditations, as I lay, were on the goodness and mercy of the Lord, in a sense whereof my heart was contrited. After this I went to sleep again ; in a short time I awoke ; it was yet dark, and no appearance of day or moonshine, and as I opened

mine eyes I saw a light in my chamber, at the apparent distance of five feet, about nine inches in diameter, of a clear, easy brightness, and near its centre the most radiant. As I lay still, looking upon it without any surprise, words were spoken to my inward ear, which filled my whole inward man. They were not the effect of thought, nor any conclusion in relation to the appearance, but as the language of the Holy One spoken in my mind. The words were, **CERTAIN EVIDENCE OF DIVINE TRUTH.** They were again repeated exactly in the same manner, and then the light disappeared." Woolman goes on with his Journal at once. He does not make a single reflection on this miraculous occurrence. That he pondered it deeply, and derived from it strong peace and encouragement, we cannot doubt. His silence—his bare narrative of the event, without the slightest suggestion as to the effect it may have had upon him, leads to the conviction produced also by other instances in his Journal, that he felt his deepest experiences could not be put into words. Many years afterwards, in January, 1770, he beheld another vision, and on this occasion he believed the gift of prophecy was bestowed upon him. He was suffering from pleurisy, and he requested a friend to write down the following vision :—"I have seen in the Light of the Lord that the day is approaching when the man that is

most wise in human policy shall be the greatest fool ; and the arm that is mighty to support injustice shall be broken to pieces ; the enemies of righteousness shall make a terrible rattle, and shall mightily torment one another ; for He that is omnipotent is rising up to judgment, and will plead the cause of the oppressed ; and He commanded me to open the vision." Whether in the American States, which was the world Woolman had in contemplation, any convulsion has taken place that bears out the language of this prophecy, every reader of their history must judge for himself.

Another instance may be given, and one that reminds us of the experience of the Apostle Paul who was caught up to the third heaven, and whether in the body or apart from the body he knew not. It must be said, however, that this occasion, like the one just named, was at a time of sickness when he was brought so near the gates of death that he forgot his own name. "Being then desirous to know who I was, I saw a mass of matter, of a dull gloomy colour, between the south and the east, and was informed that this mass was human beings in as great misery as they could be and live, and that I was mixed with them, and that henceforth I might not consider myself as a distinct or separate being. In this state I remained several hours. I then heard a soft melodious voice, more pure and har-

monious than any I had heard with my ears before ; I believed it was the voice of an angel who spake to the other angels ; the words were, ‘ John Woolman is dead.’ I soon remembered that I was once John Woolman, and being assured that I was alive in the body, I greatly wondered what that heavenly voice could mean. I believed beyond doubting that it was the voice of an holy angel, but as yet it was a mystery to me. I was then carried in spirit to the mines where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called Christians, and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ, at which I was grieved, for this name to me was precious. I was then informed that these heathens were told that those who oppressed them were the followers of Christ, and they said among themselves, ‘ If Christ directed them to use us in this sort, then Christ is a cruel tyrant.’” The vision was to some extent explained to him, and he understood that “ John Woolman is dead,” meant the death of his own will. Anyone who will read Sewel’s History will soon observe that a belief in supernatural and miraculous revelation, was commonly held amongst the Friends. Devout men, they thought, had the judgments of God not infrequently revealed to them beforehand.

A belief in witchcraft also commonly prevailed, and it is surprising that the Friends, with their robust common-sense, did not sooner shake them-

selves free from this and from certain other forms of superstition.

It must be remembered that the belief in witchcraft is very old, perhaps as old as it is possible for us to go back in the world's written records. Belief in some more or less gross form of the dark art prevails still in all Roman Catholic countries, and amongst many Protestants. The idea that a person could barter away his soul to the Prince of Evil for the privilege of gaining mischievous power over others has been almost universal, and is not yet extinct. We have said that many Quaker opinions have been increasingly adopted; it may also be added that the Quakers have been the first to abandon many popular superstitions. We must, however, guard against confounding things that are totally distinct. Witchcraft is a superstition and a delusion which is unsupported by even any plausible reason that can appeal to the understanding. It is far otherwise with visions and alleged revelations. Woolman and others may be quite unable to prove to the satisfaction of fellow minds that they have been the subjects of special Divine communication; but neither can any other mind affirm that they have *not* been so. It is within the power of God to open communication with any soul and in any manner He may think fit, and He may irresistibly convince the soul that He has done so. But that

He should, at the same time, give the power to the recipient of His action to convince any third party that He has thus intervened, is quite another and an additional thing. It is therefore not for us to deny that Woolman's alleged visions were veritable realities to his own soul. Visions and mysteries notwithstanding, Woolman's mind was singularly practical. Looking round upon the society in which he moved, he saw evils other than those connected with slavery, which he earnestly and humbly set himself to correct. Many of the *idle pastimes* common around him appeared to him to be opposed to the growth of the Christian spirit, and to be the mark of a heart away from God. For example, *lotteries* were very common, and were participated in by Friends as well as others. In one of the yearly meetings at Newport, a discussion arose on the subject. Some friends held that those persons should be excused who took part only in such lotteries as were agreeable to law, others contending that the entire practice should be discouraged. The debate was conducted with considerable vigour, and Woolman says, "In the heat of zeal, I made reply to what an ancient Friend said, and when I sat down I saw that my words were not enough seasoned with charity." He was uneasy at this, and with characteristic humility and directness he endeavoured to repair his error. "After some

close exercise and hearty repentance for not having attended closely to the safe guide, I stood up, and reciting the passage, acquainted Friends that though I durst not go from what I had said as to the matter, yet I was uneasy with the *manner* of my speaking, believing milder language would have been better. As this was uttered in some degree of creaturely abasement after a warm debate, it appeared to have a good savour amongst us." No doubt it had ; and no doubt it furthered the cause he was contending for more than would have been done by the most convincing argument. The man who could thus strip from himself every shred of pride, would possess a moral and spiritual persuasive force which no logic, however cogent, could bestow. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and, may we not add, he shall find, what he more desires, that the cause he loves is exalted too. Woolman gives as his reason against lotteries, that their spirit "was one of selfishness, which tended to confuse and darken the understanding."

Other and less objectionable practices also met with his disapproval, and in their presence he could not hold his peace. "Be instant in season and out of season," was his constraining principle. No censorious spirit animated him, but a deep and tender love for the sinful, the vain, and the wandering. The following encounter with a travelling

mountebank or juggler will illustrate this :—"The latter part of the summer, 1763, there came a man to Mount Holly who had previously published a printed advertisement, that at a certain public-house he would show many wonderful operations which are therein enumerated." The man came accordingly, and Woolman understanding the show was to be repeated the next night, "felt an exercise on that account." He then went to the public-house, and "spoke to the people in the fear of the Lord," pointing out that bestowing their money to support men who, in that capacity, were of no use to the world, was contrary to the nature of the Christian religion. Some argument followed with one of the hearers, who endeavoured to show the reasonableness of the amusement; "but after considering some texts of Scripture, and calmly debating the matter, he gave up the point." This little incident says much for the unsophisticated state of the people, as well as for the calm courage and lowly zeal of the Quaker minister.

Every one is aware that a Quaker refuses *to take an oath*, and it is equally well known that no set of men are more truthful. Woolman was one of the most transparently truthful characters Christianity has ever produced; and he was known and felt to be so by his contemporaries, as he must be by every one who reads his Journal a century after his death.

But he does not owe his high reputation to any vehemence of language. His speech was regulated by the precept of Christ. "Let your communication be, Yea, yea! Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil;" and the command "swear not at all" was taken quite literally. The reasons for this are abundantly given in Sewel's History, and we have there a multitude of instances of the Quaker refusal to take an oath. In many cases severe persecution had to be faced in consequence. An oath is imposed to secure truthfulness. The Quakers were persecuted not because they were untruthful, but because they were truthful to such a degree that they would rather suffer than be false. Had they been driven to take oaths against their conscience they would have diminished, not increased, the measure of trust they deserved. Cruelty is always illogical. Injustice is never consistent. The Quakers endured shocking ill treatment, not because they failed to secure the end aimed at by an oath—truth speaking—but because they were known to secure that end more effectively by *their* principles than their persecutors could by legal and compulsory enactments. They were punished for not taking an oath, and punished just according to the degree in which they were seen to be more truthful than any oath could possibly make them.

In this Woolman followed his brethren as they followed the early Christians, and as many others—conspicuously the Waldenses—have done in other times and countries. Morals will to a large extent follow law, though no doubt also law takes its shape according to the popular standard of morality. To teach a man he is specially bound to speak the truth at certain times, is to teach him he is *not* so bound at all times. If a man must speak the truth under penalty when on oath, he will feel that the law sanctions him in not speaking it when *not* on oath. He is taught in effect that truthfulness is a thing to be put on and off, and the uninstructed mind irresistibly infers that falsehood is of comparatively little consequence so long as an oath is not violated. People feel that they may tell a lie if they have not been sworn, and hence the custom of administering oaths has greatly tended to lower the whole tone of the community in regard to the duty of truthfulness. Jonathan Dymond, the Quaker moralist, whose writings deserve to be far better known than they are, has two chapters in his “Essays on the Principles of Morality,” which deal with this subject, and which would probably convince many doubters of the inefficacy, and indeed of the serious mischief of oaths. We are happy to believe that in the present day all faith in them as buttresses of veracity is rapidly disappearing. Woolman was

a Quaker amongst the Quakers, living chiefly with those of like principle and practice with himself. He did not travel as extensively as Fox or as Penn, and his peculiarities were not therefore the occasion of his being brought into conflict with the authorities or with the populace. He was not exposed to the disgraceful ill treatment of which we meet such frequent specimens in the lives of many of his predecessors. And his meek spirit, as we have seen, was the very opposite to the pugnacity, often of the most extreme and provoking kind, which it must be allowed characterised many of the early Quakers. But where ever he went he retained Quaker customs. He refused, for example, to take off his hat on those occasions when doing so would have conveyed any idea contrary to what he believed to be true. The Friends were often charged with being rude in this refusal, but they were prompted to it by true reverence for God, and by discriminating respect for man. As men take off their hats in prayer the act was regarded as one of homage, and such reverence should be offered to God alone. And neither towards man should an act be performed which recognised a superiority where none existed, and thus often violated truth.

The state of society in which Woolman lived was extremely simple as compared with what we are familiar with in the present day ; nevertheless he

was painfully impressed with the folly and, indeed, the wickedness of the luxury he saw around him. He gives us the following definition :—"When we in the least degree depart from that use of the creatures for which the Creator of all things intended them, then *Luxury* begins." Stately buildings and equipages, delicious food, superfine clothes, silks, and linens, choice metal fastened upon raiments, and other showy inventions of men are marks of a want of soundness of understanding, and are a departure from true Gospel simplicity. He saw that many members of the Society of Friends made a specious appearance in the world ; and that it was becoming customary amongst them and their children to use silver and other watches. He regarded these things as marks of degeneration, and he gave his quiet and very earnest protest against them. When he saw entertainments set off with silver vessels, and thus as he thought "stained with worldly glory," he felt he must take heed to his conduct whenever he might be present on such occasions. He "dined once at a Friend's house where drink was brought in silver vessels, and not in any other. Wanting something to drink, I told him my case with weeping, and he ordered some drink for me in another vessel." Similar experiences befel him both in England and America, and after telling us this he adds, "I have cause to acknow-

ledge with humble reverence the loving kindness of my Heavenly Father who hath preserved me in such a tender frame of mind, that none, I believe, have ever been offended at what I have said on that subject."

He reasoned that habits of luxury were closely connected with the institution of slavery. For the sake of personal indulgence, and ostentatious pride, men who had the power compelled their fellow creatures to work for them. The great amount of labour imposed upon slaves would not be necessary if simplicity of life prevailed. Let luxuries be dispensed with, and it would be comparatively easy for all to live in peace and comfort. Not only would all enforced labour be needless, but the grinding drudgery which presses with crushing force upon hundreds of thousands would be greatly lessened. To give effect to these principles, Woolman urged parents to educate their children in "the disuse of all superfluities." He encouraged young women to be content with a plain way of life, and he assured them that thus they would have more true peace and calmness of mind than they who, aspiring to greatness and outward show, have grasped hard for an income to support themselves therein. His views are found at length in an essay published in 1793, and entitled, "A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich." It is

divided into twelve sections, and it is full of a wisdom that is needed in the present day even more than it was when the essay first appeared. When the author tells us, for example, that "if more men were usefully employed, and fewer ate bread as a reward for doing that which is not useful, food and raiment would, on a reasonable estimate, be more in proportion to labour than they are at present;" he points out a principle which political economists have demonstrated to us again and again since Woolman's day, but which unhappily neither Christian philanthropists, nor politicians, nor the community at large appear generally to have accepted. The cry of poverty is met by the exhortation to labour for luxury, and the wasteful indulgence of one class is alleged to make good for the trade of all the other classes. The fallacy may require much reasoning to expose it, and this is not the place for the discussion, but John Woolman's insight—whatever we may think of his logic—saw clearly that no society could go on consuming the fruits of its labour in the swiftly perishing productions that minister to luxury, and yet grow rich in the solid comforts available for all. Whether we agree with him or not, we shall have no difficulty in adopting his prayer :—"O that all may take heed and beware of covetousness! O that all may learn of Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. Then

in faithfully following Him, He will teach us to be content with food and raiment without respect to the customs or honors of this world. Men thus redeemed will feel a tender concern for their fellow creatures, and a desire that those in the lowest stations may be assisted and encouraged."

It follows from his views on luxury that he was thoroughly in accord with the Quaker observance of simplicity in dress. A very sound principle is at the bottom of this. In nothing is the spirit of luxury and of class pride seen more widely than in personal decoration. Woolman very truly says: "When we aspire after imaginary grandeur, and apply to selfish means to attain our end, this desire in its origin is the same with that of the Picts, in cutting figures on their bodies; but the evil consequences attending our proceedings are the greatest." The comparison with the Picts is not flattering, but it is too true, for envy, hatred, and discontent invariably follow the displays of a flaunting ambition. And the evil is in the highest degree contagious. It flows down from class to class till all society is tainted with the poison of a miserable vanity. A protest on behalf of simplicity in dress has not ceased to be inappropriate. Women, and men too, are in bondage to the dress maker, and the dress maker is the bondservant of the whims and caprices of the hour. A slave of

slaves is the poor mortal who must always have his or her plumage cut and tinted according to the last crude and often hideous design that the goddess fashion has been pleased to throw out from her shallow imagination.

And it is not only in the interest of Christian morals and of spiritual tone that this remonstrance may be made. It seems specially called for in the face of the common economical fallacy mentioned above, that lavish expenditure is a good thing for workpeople. The holders of this opinion appear to forget that labour employed in producing display or in ministering to a passing enjoyment, is simply so much labour diverted from the production of what is useful, that is, of what would add permanently to the possessions and the resources of mankind. Woolman accordingly kept to that spirit "which teaches us to be content with things really needful, and to avoid all superfluities."

The question is by no means one between extravagance with beauty, against economy with ugliness. The pairs are often extravagance with ugliness on the one side, and economy with beauty on the other. But if good taste is often sacrificed to mere expense, it must also be admitted that simplicity may be carried to an extreme of rigidity, in which all beauty and even ordinary seemliness is *transformed* into a grotesque chaos. And we must

not withhold the admission that Woolman illustrated this catastrophe. He carried his conscientious scruples to such an extent that he could not reconcile himself to wear clothing that had been *dyed*. In this, as in most other things, he was faithful to the great founder of the Quakers—George Fox; and it was a fidelity that a large number of Friends did not observe.

Perhaps he was not aware that in this practice he, and such other Friends as observed it, were in company with one of the most illustrious Fathers of the church and many of his followers. Clement, of Alexandria, says: "Dyeing of clothes is to be rejected, for it is remote both from necessity and truth, in addition to the fact that reproach in manners springs from it. . . . Agreeableness of the colour afflicts greedy eyes." And indeed long before Clement and Christianity, Plato, whom Clement quotes, says that "dyes should not be applied except for warlike purposes," an exception which would but strengthen in Woolman's view the duty of rejecting them altogether. He believed that the custom of wearing hats and garments dyed with a dye hurtful to them was not founded in pure wisdom. But he had no affectation, and the apprehension of being singular was a strait to him. It tempted him for awhile to continue the use of some things contrary to his judgment. He thought

of getting a hat that should be of the natural colour of the fur, but for a while he was deterred by the fear of singularity. He however made everything, as we have already seen, the subject of deep spiritual meditation. He considered "that things, though small in themselves, being clearly enjoined by Divine authority, become great things to us," and he trusted the Lord would support him "so long as singularity was only for His sake." By the time we reach this incident in the Journal we are quite sure how the good man will act. The hat, "the natural colour of the fur," he got, of course, and he wore it at meetings. Some of the Friends, especially those who displayed white hats for the sake of being in the fashion, were shy of him, so that his way in the ministry was for a time "shut up." But his mind was turned towards his Heavenly Father with fervent cries, and he "felt an inward consolation." His whole appearance must have been very droll—a sort of Robinson Crusoe; and he evidently had not the slightest sense of the ridiculous aspect he must have presented. His narrative is pathetic and comical in the extreme—we weep and laugh at the same time—though it narrates nothing but what was a most serious matter to him.

One great objection that he had to dyes was that they concealed dirt. Godliness and cleanliness, the pureness of the external and of the internal,

were in his view closely connected. Travelling often in wet weather through narrow streets in towns and villages, and being but weakly, he was frequently distressed by various impurities. He says he often went where cloth had been dyed, and had "at sundry times walked over ground where much of their dye stuffs has drained away." This produced a great longing in his mind "that people might come into cleanness of spirit, cleanness of person, and cleanness about their houses and garments." He thinks, therefore, that the custom of dyeing ought to be more fully considered, as dyes are invented "partly to please the eye and partly to hide dirt." He adds the further reasons against dyes, that the spirit that would hide dirt leads to the concealment of any thing that may be materially or morally disagreeable, and is contrary to sincerity, that dyes render the cloth less useful, and that if the expense of dying were devoted to cleanliness much good in every way would result.





CHAPTER V.

Feeble Health—Thoughts of going to Barbadoes—Anthony Benezet—Journey to England—Death in York.

WOOLMAN was not blessed with the enjoyment of robust health. He tells us that in his youth he was used to hard labour, and though he was then "middling healthy" his nature was not fitted to endure so much as others. As his life went on his strength appears to have declined. Writing under date 1769, that is, when he was forty-nine years of age, and within about three years and-a-half of his death, he says that for some years past he had dieted himself "on account of illness and weakness of body," and he notes that he had not the same ability to travel by land as formerly.

It appears that in later years he adopted the plan of journeying much more frequently on foot than he had been accustomed to do before. In 1765 he paid a visit to Friends on the eastern shore of Maryland, and he resolved to travel on foot that he might "have a more lively feeling

of the condition of the oppressed slaves, set an example of lowliness before the eyes of their masters, and be more out of the way of temptation to unprofitable converse." He went in company with a beloved friend, John Sleeper, who "also was under a similar concern to travel on foot in the form of a servant among them, as he expressed it." To itinerate in this laborious manner was quite exceptional, but at an earlier period he would have done it without difficulty. He says little of his own hardships, but the remark, "I grew weakly, at which I was for a time discouraged," is one that shows he was conscious of failing vigour. But with unfailing Christian trust he has immediately reason for thinking that the bodily weakness is a kindness, as he "had been in danger of too strongly desiring to get quickly through the journey." The weakness he felt, "joined with a heavy exercise of mind," was a "humbling dispensation," but he compared his sufferings with those of Jesus and many of His faithful followers, and with thankfulness he was made content. We find again that he "walks" into some parts of the western shore of Maryland, and he calls it a "lonesome walk," and speaks of "discouragements and a weight of distress."

But his affliction was one which he well knew how to use. He dealt with it as a wise and a

Christian man. He did not resent or complain of the growing feebleness which was assigned to him to bear. It led him to a deeper sympathy with "all who labour and are heavy laden," though some of his plans for aiding his suffering fellow creatures he is compelled to forego.

It was about this time that he suffered from a severe attack of pleurisy, and during his illness he saw one of the visions already referred to. His close and conscious relation to the spiritual world was the source of encouragement to him in all his labours and self-sacrifices. And his brave heart was so powerfully upheld by Divine strength that no passing attack of illness, and no general failure of health could abate his interest in the great purpose of his life. He is never weary in well doing. Whatever may be the feebleness of his body he does not faint in his mind. His heart overflows with tenderness, and his compassion is abiding. We see no display of sudden energy followed by a collapse; no flash of emotion, brilliant for an instant, and then extinct. He never betrays excitement, and he never gives expression to anger and indignation. His feeling towards his fellow creatures in bondage was one of sustained sympathy. No failure of health quenched his zeal or turned his first solicitude upon himself.

In his teaching of the subject of slavery Woolman urged immediate emancipation. He sought to bring this about by inducing individual action. He would not have his Christian brethren wait for the intervention of any law. They ought to give their slaves freedom at once as an act of clear obedience to Christ. To hold slaves was not only injurious to all concerned; it was essentially wrong, and it should immediately cease irrespective of all consequences. In harmony with this deep conviction it appeared to Woolman that he should abstain, as far as possible, from everything that might give even the most indirect countenance to slavery. His thoroughness and unflinching consistency required him to keep free from the most remote sanction of the system. He would not so much as touch the unclean thing. One immediate conclusion drawn from this inflexible position was, that he must observe a total abstinence from sharing, however indirectly, in the profits of slave labour, and from all consumption of slave produce.

A striking instance of this occurred in connection with an intention he cherished for a time of making a missionary journey to the West Indies. In the year 1769 he believed it was required of him to undertake such an expedition, and he accordingly obtained the proper certificates from the Friends

Meeting. Hearing of a vessel likely to sail to Barbadoes he spoke to one of the owners, and showed him a memorandum he had drawn up on the question of the lawfulness of the voyage. We may doubt whether any ship owner had ever such a document presented to him before or since. The paper sets forth that Woolman had in early days made some profit by dealing in rum, sugar, and molasses. It is impressed upon his conscience that he should spend a sum equivalent to that former profit upon some work that would promote righteousness on the earth. This money ought to be employed in a way that should form, as closely as could be contrived, some sort of compensation for the error that had been committed. The error had been in connection with commerce in which West Indian slavery was involved; the tribute of penitence must be paid in that direction. But if a kind of atonement is due for the old fault, how much more should he abstain from availing himself of any further profit arising out of the same trade. To become in any way advantaged by West Indian slave labour would not only be no atonement, it would be a repetition of the offence. The question thereupon arises, ought he to take a passage in a vessel engaged in the very trade which he repented having ever been associated with? If he availed himself of the ship would he not become an

accomplice in the traffic? would he not appear to "strengthen the hands of the wicked?" He then proceeds to employ a most remarkable piece of reasoning, though it fails (as we cannot wonder that it should) to convince his conscience. He argues that if pure righteousness prevailed, a *small* amount of trade with the West Indies might be unblamable. But a higher rate of passage money would be demanded in the case of a small trade than of one more extensive. He ought not to take advantage of "great trade and small passage money." Such a state of things is directly traceable to slavery, and his conclusion therefore is, that if he takes the anticipated trip to Barbadoes he "should pay more than is common for others to pay as a testimony in favour of less trading." The paper containing these representations he actually handed to the owner of the ship, and they "had some solid conversation" over it. For a while he could not decide, "and was tossed as in a tempest." This continued for some little time, but happily, just before the ship sailed, it was revealed to him that he should not go, but "should pass through some further exercises near home." The meditated journey to Barbadoes was thus given up, and he laboured in his own country "in the fear and dread of the Almighty."

On the same principle he abstained from the

use of slave-grown sugar, and in fact of everything produced by slave-labour. In England, in more recent years, and during the conflict that preceded our own abolition of slavery in the West Indies, under the impulse given by Wilberforce, Clarkson, Brougham, and many more, a similar abstinence was observed.

Woolman tells us that he owed the confirmation of his views in regard to slave produce to Anthony Benezet. This ardent Quaker and abolitionist had come from France in very early life. His parents were Huguenot refugees, so that young Anthony came of a good liberty-loving stock. He became a Quaker, and taught a school in Philadelphia. He was eccentric and determined, and amongst other peculiarities he dressed himself in plush, because, owing to its economical wear, it formed a cheap garment, and left him with more money to give away. As a most vigorous opponent of negro slavery he seems to have exercised considerable influence on Woolman.

In the Spring Meeting of Ministers and Elders in 1772, Woolman made known that he had a religious concern to cross the seas that he might visit Friends in the north of England. He obtained the proper certificate, and then looked out for means to carry his intention into effect. A particular friend of his, one Samuel Emlen, had, as it

happened, taken a cabin passage at that very time by the "Mary and Elizabeth" to London. But in Woolman's mind there at once arose serious scruples as to giving any countenance to the luxury which a passage in the cabin would involve. He felt "a draught" in his mind towards the steerage of the ship, and he opened his mind to Samuel on the subject. Samuel wept with joy at the thought of Woolman going with him, and offered to accompany him in the steerage. In those days the steerage passage was something dreadful. In fact the most luxurious form of sailing was, in many respects, far inferior to what is now provided for the poorest emigrants. Woolman had means sufficient to have taken the voyage in the manner that would have been adopted by any of his associates, but his sensitive conscience could not reconcile with his deep and life-long convictions any act that might appear to countenance luxury and its attendant evils of excessive labour and oppression.

Just as, when thinking of visiting Barbadoes, he had explained his views to the owner of the vessel, so he now goes with his friend, "Samuel Emlen, to the house of the owner to whom, in the hearing of Samuel only," he "opened" his "exercise in relation to a scruple" with regard to a passage in the cabin. He tells the owner that he had

observed, on the outside of that part of the ship where the cabin was, "sundry sorts of carved work and imagery," and in the cabin also "some superfluity of workmanship of several sorts." He thinks that "the sum of money to be paid for a passage in that apartment has some relation to the expense of furnishing it to please the minds of such as give way to a conformity to this world."

The longer he lived and the more he saw of mankind the deeper grew his conviction that the connection between luxury and oppression was intimate and essential. He met with continually fresh evidence that, with a view to grow rich and provide estates for their children, men became entangled in the spirit of selfishness. He saw plainly, and preached earnestly, and supported by heroic self-denial, the duty of a simple life. He knew that as long as society indulges in a host of superfluities a large number of its members must work far beyond what would otherwise be necessary, with the inevitable consequence that the poor are ground down to the lowest possible point. As in a household, so in society as a whole, you cannot spend the income on the special indulgences of a few members of the family, and at the same time have sufficient left to furnish comfort for all. Woolman seems to have regarded the sea-faring *life* as almost hopelessly bad, and as existing, in

great part, in answer to the unhallowed desire of mankind for luxuries. Perhaps none could now go with him to this extent, but we can heartily adopt his desire that men should "so abide in the love of Christ, that being delivered from the entangling expenses of a curious, delicate, and luxurious life, we may learn contentment with a little, and promote the sea-faring life no further than that spirit which leads into all truth attends us in our proceedings."

He of course persisted in his intention. He must always support his convictions by his conduct, and he accordingly took his passage in the steerage. His friends knew his inflexibility; they would perhaps call it his obstinacy. He says, in his quiet matter-of-fact way, they "appeared disposed to leave me to the Lord," a very happy way indeed of leaving him, and with which the simple-hearted hero was quite content.

They started on the first of May, 1772. He bid farewell to his wife and family, and he saw them no more on this side the grave. While on the voyage he records the remark, "I felt a tender sympathy of soul with my poor wife and family left behind—in which state my heart was enlarged in desires that they may walk in the humble obedience, wherein the everlasting Father may be *their* guide and support through all *their*

difficulties in this world ;” and on his death bed he said he had taken leave of his wife and family as never to return, and he added, “though I feel them near to me at this time yet I have freely given them up, having a hope that they will be provided for.” This is all he says about them. His personal affections he keeps wonderfully in the background, an evidence, with which everything else is consistent, of his extreme humility.

The passage was a most wretched if not a dangerous one, but Woolman endeavoured to turn it to good account. He held services on board, and had many earnest Christian conversations with both the crew and the passengers. And during the voyage he gathered fresh evidence on the immeasurable evil of slavery. He was not a man of but one idea. His sympathies were wide and deep, but he was so possessed with the sense of the evil of slavery that he traced its influence in directions where no one else would have observed it. The depraved condition of seamen, for example, he connects with the monster sin. Slavery is productive to a large extent of luxurious living, and it necessarily fosters selfishness and cruelty. This spirit begets in its support an excessive commerce, and this in turn compels a great number of men to betake themselves to a sea-faring life. But whether such a life was traceable to the sin of

slave-owning or not, Woolman cherished a quick and deep sympathy with the poor and the oppressed wherever he met them in their sorrow. Ready to bear any denial of self, he cherished toward others the tenderest care, and could not see them suffer without stretching out a hand to help. This is evident throughout the whole of his history, but it glows with increased brightness towards the close. He was instant in season and out of season, and the voyage to the mother country (during which his heart and his efforts were drawn out to the sailors) was by no means a useless occasion; perhaps no period of his life had been spent in more unselfish consecration to the good of his fellow men.

Of five young lads that formed part of the crew of the "Mary and Elizabeth" three were of Quaker origin or training. The peril in which their characters stood appealed to Woolman's compassion. He looked at them as though they were his children according to the flesh, and it would be interesting to know how the boys looked at him. We hear nothing of them afterwards, but we may venture to believe that they never forgot that odd-looking, quiet, deeply earnest, and loving steerage passenger.

Woolman perceived that seamen were specially open to the temptation of strong drink through

their exposure to wet and cold. In his Essay "On a Sailor's Life," printed in London the year after his death, he calls attention to this, and endeavours to awaken the Christian conscience on the subject. He says in his Journal "That lamentable degeneracy, which so much prevails in the people employed on the sea, so affected my heart that I cannot easily convey the feeling I had to another." He describes a storm, and he does this without any use of nautical phraseology, unless we may except the quaint expression, "they now ceased from sailing, and put the vessel in the posture called, 'lying to.'" During the tempest his mind was preserved in a good degree of resignation, and he was able to speak words of sympathy and help to the crew. All the time he was in such a weak state of health that he frequently had to get up at night, and come on deck, or stand near the hatch-way, for the sake of breathing the fresh air. He suffered from loss of appetite and general debility, but his brave and patient soul regarded this as a dispensation from the Great Father to bring him, in some degree, to feel what thousands of his fellow creatures were required often and more severely to suffer. Self is the very last object of his thoughts. His desire to be of use to the sailors carries his mind away from *his own pains and frailties, and he thinks it a com-*

pensation that some of the sailors can add to his knowledge of the horrors of the African trade in slaves.

On the 8th of the 6th month, 1772, he landed in London, and the first thing he did was to present himself to the Yearly Meeting of the Ministers and Elders of the Friends, which was then in session. He afterwards attended quarterly meetings in many places, travelling into Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Yorkshire. In the latter county he visited "a large inland town," called Sheffield. He made good use of his opportunities for observation, noting the prices of leading articles of consumption, and the rate of wages, and the condition of the labourer. One particular act of characteristic self-denial is touching and instructive. Unlike his usual mode of journeying at home he travelled in England without a horse. He often used stage coaches of which the horses were ridden by post boys. It appeared that this duty was the cause of great suffering to the boys. Woolman had heard as much in his own country, and what he sees in England confirms the report. He therefore cautioned friends, both in America and in London, not to send letters to him on any common occasion by the post, and he adds, "though on this account I may be likely not to hear so often from

my family left behind, yet for righteousness sake I am through Divine favour made content." How much this must have involved, and yet how unhesitatingly is the act of self-sacrifice performed, and how simply it is told! Some of us,—common-place mortals that we are,—may perhaps ask, what possible difference could it make to the post boys whether they carried John Woolman's letters or not. His act of self-denial would occasionally be most distressing to himself, but it would not perceptibly relieve any rider of the least measure of ache or pain. Probably not one of them would ever know that any man had cherished such kindly, though quite unpractical, thoughts towards them. Great deprivation to him, no good to them, was the manifest utilitarian conclusion. But Woolman could no more argue in that way than the sun could argue that it must see the effect of every beam before it agreed to shine. Perhaps the argument might be answered. When we consider our blind inability to trace powerful effects to their first and insignificant causes; when we perceive our ignorance in judging, till long afterwards, the initiatory force of any incident, we feel that the calculation of results is constantly far too obscure to form a safe foundation for conduct, or to furnish any guiding principle. The offering of a box of spikenard to the Lord was but a little incident.

He for whom it was done made it immortal, and it has instructed and encouraged hearts innumerable. Possibly Woolman's self-denial about the post boys has suggested fruitful thought and action to hundreds of well-intentioned minds, and none of us can venture to assert that it was a sacrifice thrown away.

But whether the utilitarian objection is or is not raised, and if raised whether it is or is not unanswerable, we are quite assured that Woolman was not troubled with it. He never raised or discussed it at all. The sensitive conscience in sympathy with the Perfect One can raise no such question. Woolman did what he did because he saw it was right to do so. There was nothing else to be done. That was the beginning and the end of the argument. There was no question of consequence or of reward. The final consequence was the satisfaction of the faithful heart. The reward was in the act itself. He was blessed *in his deed*, whether anything further came of it or not.

In September, 1772, Woolman was at York at the house of a Friend, Thomas Priestman, and he was there seized with small-pox, a disorder that had already made havoc in the circle of his friends. At first he would allow no doctor to be sent for, but after a few days, an apothecary coming in unsought, the sick man consented to take some

medicine, or at least to consider whether he would do so or not, provided only that it "did not come through defiled channels or oppressive hands." But all remedies were in vain. His work was done. He was wholly resigned to live or to die, and it was the latter and the better to which his Heavenly Father called him. On Wednesday, October 7th, 1772, at a quarter-past six in the morning, he died, and one of the sweetest spirits that has ever dwelt amongst rough and sinful men began to live—set free from the encumbrance of mortality. He let go the body without a struggle, passing quite peacefully into that world where compassion is purified, and can be cherished without pain, and where we may believe a perfect faith, which is the truest "sight," enables the soul to look down upon, and to sympathise with the miseries of mankind, without impairing its own perfect peace.





CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

IT is the object of the foregoing little sketch to induce those who may read it to make themselves acquainted with Woolman's Journal. It may be hoped that Librarians of Free Libraries, of Mechanics' Institutions, and of Sunday Schools, and all who have the opportunity of introducing books to the reading community, and especially to the young, will place the "Journal" on their list of books to be obtained. With this hope it is not necessary here to add many words. His life, as brought before us in the "Journal," speaks for itself. It is not noisy. It shines a clear calm light of rare and exquisite radiance. As we seek to bring to a focus upon our minds the varied impressions we have gathered from the whole, we are sensible that it has touched us far more deeply than is the case with the great majority of autobiographies. The sword of criticism is quite struck out of our hand. We never wish to argue any-

thing with Woolman. It is of course easy to say that we differ from him again and again, but the profit we derive from him, and the kind of power he has over us have nothing to do with the logical strength or weakness of his positions. "Do we agree with this and that?" is a question that we feel is out of place. It is the loving, lovable, and lovely spirit of the man that is the spell. It always fascinates, it never challenges. We may find it quite impossible to follow him in his reasoning, but none the less are we conscious that to have met him, and conversed with him, is to have received an impulse that modifies the spiritual habit of our lives.

To read such a life in the busy, hurrying days in which we live may prove a very suggestive exercise. It is little more than a hundred years since Woolman died, but the primitive simplicity of many parts of his "Journal" seems to take us back to some distant age. To study the early Quakers, and the "Journal" of Woolman as a specimen of Quaker principles exhibited in actual life, would be to many like an introduction to a new world. We might be amongst the Christians of the first three centuries.

The external condition of society has certainly undergone great changes since his day. But if we naturally refer to steam engines, telegraphs,

penny posts, and daily newspapers, we feel these things are but the outward signs of changes deep and essential in the whole modes of thought and action. The world itself may be said to have enlarged enormously during the last two centuries. A passion for discovery has accomplished this, and now, the least known portion of the globe—the vast island of New Guinea—is on the eve of revealing to the explorer her hitherto concealed features and character. At the same time the scattered segments of the human race are increasingly drawn nearer together. The rapidity of locomotion, and of verbal intercourse, tends to destroy the separating power both of time and space. There are those who preach the depressing doctrine that the social, moral, and spiritual condition of mankind shows no improvement as the ages travel on. But this unhappy view finds no support in a comparison between the state of society in the present day and that which existed when our great grandfathers were young. The change is marvellous. The spirit of liberty has been at work in fashions that Woolman never anticipated. Persecution in its grosser forms has ceased amongst all civilised nations. The whole missionary enterprise is carried on under conditions immeasurably more favourable than have existed in any former age. The international and the

scientific protection of life, the facilities for acquiring languages, the cosmopolitan translation of Scripture, the practical accessibility of almost every habitable spot upon the earth's surface, the highly organised methods of proclaiming truth, and the vast wealth of Christian countries combine to give a coign of vantage to the Church of Christ such as it never held before. The great temptation is to suppose that these things are a guarantee or a proof of spiritual life. They are all dead bones in the valley till they are breathed upon by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts.

A visit Woolman paid to the Red Indians, to preach Christ to them, brings vividly before us, by contrast with modern operations, the vast changes that missionary methods and conditions of work have undergone in late years. In the 8th month of 1761, Woolman was visiting some Friends in Philadelphia, and chanced to fall in with some natives from the east branch of the Susquehanna river. For many years he had felt love in his heart towards the neglected people "who dwell far back in the wilderness." He felt "inward drawings" to visit them, though he mentioned the idea to no one but his wife, "until it came to some ripeness." He had some hope of these savages, believing them to be "measurably acquainted with that Divine power which subjects the rough and froward will

of the creature." In the winter of 1762, by which time the idea seems to have become a definite purpose, he named it to the Meeting, and the Assembly approved of his design. An Indian "Pilot" (we should say "guide," or if we had been reading Fenimore Cooper's novels, should call the man a "Path-finder,") was engaged, and he was accompanied or attended by three women. The journey "felt weighty, for it was to be undertaken at a time when travelling appeared perilous." Woolman thought on it often "with unusual sadness," and he "frequently turned to the Lord with inward breathings for His heavenly support," and the language of the Psalmist came home to his heart with comfort,—“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” The very night before he set off he was aroused from sleep by some zealous Friend who awoke him to give him the encouraging information that the Indians had just scalped and slain some people near Pittsburg,—the very direction Woolman was about to take. But he was undeterred. His prayer was that he might be moved by nothing but “the pure spirit of truth.” He took leave of his family and friends accordingly, and set out “in much bowedness of spirit.” After he had reached the place where he met the Indian guide, a friend, named Benjamin Parvin, joined

him, and insisted on going with him. The first thing they heard of was the shameful conduct of certain white traders. These men sold rum to the Indians, "which," says Woolman, "I believe is a great evil." Of this iniquity modern missionaries have unhappily similar tales to tell. Other and curious incidents characterised the journey, which was a sort of miniature Pilgrim's Progress. As the travellers drew near to the haunts of the Indians they noticed that on the sides of large trees, peeled for the purpose, there "were various representations of men going to and returning from the wars, and of some being killed in battle." These frescoes were done in red or black, and were more interesting than encouraging. As Woolman contemplated them he thought on "the innumerable afflictions which the proud, fierce spirit produceth in the world," and of the toils and miseries of warfare. The journey was full of hardship, but the missionary's eye was "to the great Father of Mercies," and he was "most quiet and content."

But he had another source of trouble in addition to outward discomforts and fears. The dangers and discouragements appeared so formidable that they gave rise to a painful doubt as to what he should do. He says, "In this great distress I grew *jealous* of myself, lest the desire of reputation as

a man firmly settled to persevere through dangers, or the fear of disgrace from my returning without performing the visit, might have some place in me." It was, however, made clear to him that he should go on, and so in spite of all obstacles within and without, and notwithstanding the fact that the interpreters were not "quite perfect," either in the English or the Delaware tongue, they persevered, or, as Woolman expresses it, "We laboured along, Divine love attending." One afternoon, "being filled with a heavenly care" for the good of the people, he believed they would understand him without the intervention of an interpreter, and he accordingly preaches to them in his own English, and he believed "the Holy Ghost wrought on some hearts to edification, where all the words were not understood." We can well believe it. This was not an instance of the gift of tongues, but the manifest earnestness, faith, and love of the preacher were a language without words, and formed an instrument the Divine Spirit might be pleased to employ. He returned from his visit to the Indians without harm, and when he took leave of them they appeared to cherish feelings of affection.

It is quite evident that the announcement of the Gospel of Christ to the degraded and the heathen cannot always be carried on in this fashion. The

modern machinery of subscribers, boards, fixed salaries, diaries, periodical reports, minute statistics, and public meetings is what the Christian Church has found most suitable to its purposes. The Divine Spirit is at the present hour leading the disciples of Christ into wise methods of work as truly as He did in former times. We must not hastily say that other methods were superior to our own, or that the former times were better than these. To say this is almost to disbelieve the promise of our Lord to be with His disciples to the end of the world. Our methods, we think, are an improvement upon the past, and if so, it is not because we are better men than "the ancients," but because the Spirit of Truth has patiently continued to teach the Church, and has shown it how to gather up the lessons of experience, and to gain skill in the application of its resources. But if there is any truth in this we ought to look with greater faith and hope for the fulfilment of the promise, and we should expect a harvest of a value and a measure greatly in excess of that which our ancestors were permitted to reap.

The attainment of many of the great objects that Woolman had in view has been brought nearer by rapid strides, if not actually achieved, since his compassionate heart ceased to beat. Pre-eminently the grand cause of human freedom

for which he patiently and lovingly laboured has triumphed beyond all expectation. He tells us that for the slaves his cries "were often put up to the Heavenly Father in secret," and their case rested as an awful cloud upon his mind, and he could say with David that "tears were his meat day and night." The benevolent heart need weep no more. The work in which Woolman was such a devoted pioneer has been crowned with glorious fruit. Incalculable misery has been arrested. The great reproach of civilised, and so-called Christian, nations has been swept back and a whole race of mankind rescued from oppression, and started on the path of social, moral, and spiritual elevation.

But whatever vast bounds and leaps of progress may have been taken in the vindication of human freedom during the past hundred years, we cannot yet say that the goal is reached. Even European powers still countenance the slave trade. Turkey notoriously engages in it, and Portugal in vain endeavours to free herself from the same charge. And even where freedom is achieved, there too often remains a deep class prejudice that is in direct opposition to all Christian principle. It is melancholy to read the following:—"Strangely enough Philadelphia, once the seat of enthusiastic and self-devoted Quaker abolitionism, the home of that noble and admirable woman, Lucretia Mott,

who stood heroically in its vanguard, is now one of the strongholds of the most illiberal prejudice against the blacks."* Nevertheless almost all the great questions in which Woolman's heart was so deeply interested have been advanced with a rapidity that would have filled him with thankfulness, could he have foreseen it. Some of the strongest forces affecting modern society, and forming the most important factors of our civilization, were then in the earliest days of their activity, and the energy they have since put forth has transformed large provinces of political and religious life. The principle of freedom and the rights of the individual have made themselves understood. Not only has slavery received its death-blow, so that where it is not already slain, it is manifestly staggering to its fall, but the Christian doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man has received a wide recognition which a century ago was hardly dreamed of. Wars and rumours of wars still fill the air, and armaments grow with the growing power of nations; but it will not be denied that civilized states are far from being as hasty as they were formerly to draw the sword; while the number of those who urge the principles of peace is continually increasing.

* F. A. Kemble's "Records of a Girlhood." Vol. iii. p. 247.

In the prosecution of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, no people have played so noble and self-sacrificing a part as the Society of Friends. From the very first year of their origin they have ever been in the van of Progress, and as they have not fought with carnal weapons, their triumphs have been solid and enduring. They have conquered through suffering, and the blessings their patience has won, are won for ever. All that portion of society that has any title to the name of Liberal is more and more penetrated with Quaker principles. Any new forms of sacerdotal superstition, or indeed of tyranny and oppression in any shape, are best encountered and will be finally overthrown by the Divine gift to the individual heart of that Wisdom, Truth, and Love which George Fox and his followers lived and often died to proclaim. Quaker oddities—interesting historically, and at first valuable as symbols of protest against error—are dying out, but the great central doctrines of the Friends are increasingly laying hold of the conscience of mankind, and their conspicuous fidelity to their convictions can never fail to be a splendid incentive and example to every labourer in the wide field of Liberty.

It would be a happy thing for us if some other of the objects Woolman laboured and prayed for

were more nearly attained. We have seen the secular power of the Pope go down, and the weapons of torture and tyranny to which the Church of Rome so largely owes her superficial progress in past ages, forced from her reluctant and blood-stained hand. But sacerdotalism and priestcraft still interpose a class of spiritual usurpers between the soul and God; and other churches than the Papal strive hard to turn men from the simplicity of the gospel, and to entangle them again in a yoke of bondage.

So also with regard to the spirit of greed, and of that selfishness which Woolman very truly says "clouds the understanding." It besets mankind with an effect not less deadly than was the case in Woolman's day. Many observers of the present habits of the commercial world are ready to assure us that any change of tone in recent years has been not for the better but the worse. Perhaps direct contact with the present, while the past is dim and impalpable, may give a false and an unduly adverse impression. Be that as it may, the keen spirit of business almost everywhere rampant often merits prophetic admonition. When lust of gain engrosses the whole life, men become, as Woolman puts it, "like those who dwell among the tombs, and are touching the bodies of the dead." To sacrifice all the higher aims of which

life is capable for the sake of wealth is not far, if at all, removed from fraud. It is indeed robbing God, if it is not directly dishonest towards man. Jeremiah's warning has not yet become needless : "As the partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not ; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."


It is equally true that the habits of luxury Woolman deprecated are not yet regarded as the unworthy relics of a barbaric age. Pomp and folly, extravagant ostentation and vain display still gratify the minds, and impoverish the purses of both high and low. Expenditure that brings no comfort, and labour that is but

"the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up,"

still have a deadly fascination for mankind. These things are unhappily true, and many more like them. But speaking broadly, all the great principles for which the early Quakers contended are winning principles. From the days of Fox to the present hour they have been shining more and more, though not all of them have yet reached the perfect day.

We have tried to show the relation John Woolman held to these Quaker principles, and the kind

of contribution he gave to the great work. He took no conspicuous part in any illustrious national or historical incident. Perhaps his greatest achievement was the success he met with in leading the Quakers of Pennsylvania to the important decision of 1758. In that year they passed the memorable resolution that Friends must relinquish the practice of owning slaves, or must suffer expulsion from the Society. To this point they were led mainly by Woolman's influence. But we are not to look in the direction of famous actions for the evidence of Woolman's real power. Many kinds of agents are employed by the Lord of the vineyard, and those that work in quietness, like the sunshine and the dew, are by no means the least effective. Woolman strikingly illustrated the maxim that the battle is not always to the strong, or the race to the swift. It was not by human might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that his life's work was done. We see in him the power of humility, of gentleness, of love. The weak things of the world confound the things that are mighty. Every Christian man believes that the world is being conquered by a cause that began in a minority of one. Woolman had thorough faith in this cause, and he never troubled himself to ask whether that faith was justified by *visible* results. He believed in the power of holi-



ness, he knew it was incomparably the greatest power in the world. It was enough for him to work under this conviction, and with the never-failing sense of the Divine presence. It is remarkable that he seems seldom to draw encouragement from any bright anticipations as to the future. He had a certain conviction of ultimate triumph, but it was the present sense of God, and not any glowing picture of hope that supported his faith and patience. To a man in whom temporal ambition is absolutely dead, and who has abandoned all desire of secular gain, half life's temptations have become powerless. The world is under his feet. To live is Christ, and the deep happiness of such a life needs no support from prophetic visions.

Woolman furnishes a signal instance of independence without pugnacity, and of self-reliance without pride. He did his work in connection with a system that had the least possible amount of organisation, and then he did it connected with that organisation in the slenderest possible degree. The certificate he received from the Quarterly Meetings was just enough to show he was not an impostor. Organisations no doubt are useful to lead men into work, to develop powers, to ascertain and test the best methods of labour, to give regularity and persistence to Christian attempts, and to concentrate small efforts that might other-

wise be dissipated, and thus to enable a vast number of Christian people to take part in Christian enterprises, who would otherwise find no outlet for their zeal. But men, who are able to labour alone, or at least detached from all machinery, and animated only by the indwelling Spirit of God, are a help to us all. To look at a quiet, unobtrusive, but most original character of this kind, may perhaps be of not less service than to study some almost inaccessible hero. Woolman was a true crusader of the highest type, resolute, humble, gentle, and unselfish. But he moves along a level that is not remote from our own lines. We can accompany him. Sometimes we think that the distinction between Christians and others cannot be made as evident as it was of old. Woolman, at any rate, made it perfectly clear, and without a particle of ostentation, on whose side he stood. So may we all, and thus do something to bring mankind, who, in Woolman's words, are "separated from the Divine Harmony," back again to their Father and their Lord.



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